The Magazine for Golden Age & Silver Age Collectors!

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 37
July 1996

1950'S SCI-FI!

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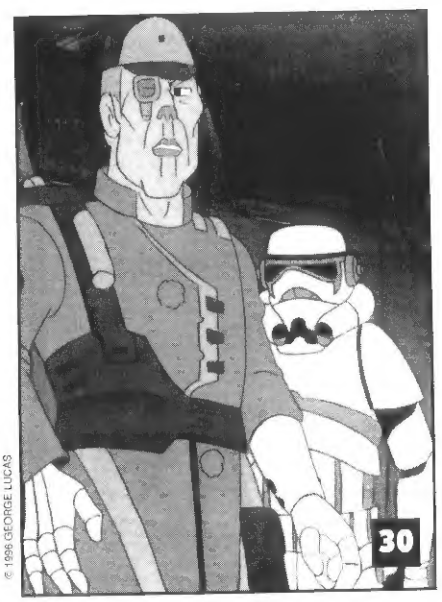

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Issue Number #37, July 1996

SCI-FI SMITHEREENS

The year was 1955 and I had never been to a "walk-in" movie theater before... and so my six-year-old brain was totally seduced by a theater marquee one fateful day. It read "It Came From Beneath The Sea!" and the one-sheet facing the street hinted at enormous tentacles and atomic submarines. That's when the begging and pleading started.

Incredibly, my mother agreed! There in the dark "inner sanctum" we found seats at the very top row. Even from that distant vantage point, the screen seemed immense. This was no puny TV... this was the way nature intended humans to be entertained!

But I was always troubled by the fact that Ray Harryhausen's giant octopus was, sadly, blown to smithereens in the final scenes of the film. Instead of trying to understand the creature, the movie focused on its destruction and the ensuing destruction it caused. Deep down, I secretly felt sorry for that oversized cephalopod. At some "instinctive" level, I always knew that killing it seemed wrong somehow, and that we lost a rare chance to understand a life form so very different from us. But hey... I was just a kid... what did I know?

In the weeks following my first sci-fi movie, I started buying (and trading for) every sci-fi comic I could get my hands on! DC's *Strange Adventures* and *Mystery In Space* were my instant favorites.

They're still my favorites today. That's because the stories weren't really written for kids... they were written for older readers. And in elementary school I reveled in the knowledge that I was reading about scientific concepts far in advance of my age. Not only that, but the pages of *Strange Adventures* and *Mystery In Space* conveyed three important messages that shaped my thinking and still influence me today.

First, the heroes of most *SA* and *MIS* stories used their brains to get out of dangerous and threatening situations. Intelligence and knowledge could prevail over evil and brute force. This was an important concept, especially considering all the examples to the contrary that I was exposed to as I made my way to adulthood.

Second, *SA* and *MIS* allowed me to have an imagination when so many adults wouldn't. But even more, those wonderful stories required me to exercise my inventiveness and problem solving skills as part of my involvement with the plot.

Third, the underlying message of most stories suggested that being intelligent was a good thing! In story after story, natural disasters and alien invasions are overcome by men of scientific knowledge and character. That's an incredibly important idea to convey to kids.

The pages of *Strange Adventures* and *Mystery In Space* promoted scientific investigation, knowledge, problem solving, personal resolve, and most of all, character. That's a pretty impressive and commendable set of ideals I was learning. Yet people kept telling me that sci-fi was dumb and that comics were bad. I didn't care. I knew first hand of the wonder and knowledge they held... and I just kept on reading.

Now as I look back with the clarity only afforded by hindsight, I see it plainly. We who love sci-fi movies and sci-fi comics are really like that giant octopus in a way. Sadly, those who don't understand our fascination with the subject try to put it down or even destroy it.

But who knows... maybe the brave new world of the 21st century will have a different view and see the true value of science fiction. Maybe this time we won't be blown to smithereens in the final scenes. May you fill the holes on your want list.

Gary

Gary M. Carter, Editor

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A Practical Illustration

First I want to thank all the readers out there who wrote in their suggestions where I could find affordable reprints of Golden Age material.

I was also wondering if any of your staff have a direct relationship with any of the major publishers, e.g. Marvel, DC, etc. I have tried without success to ascertain why Marvel Masterworks stopped their series and what the publishing schedule is for the DC Archival series. It seems obvious to me that they have a relatively cheap form of additional revenue. But for unknown reasons appear to have little interest in this market. Why not repeat entire lines from the Golden and Silver Age? I just don't understand it and wonder if you would have any insights?

Also I think that it would be a real service to people like myself, who love comics, but are not experts in the field of grading, to have a practical illustration of the different grades. I really couldn't tell the difference between a VF and FN comic. Maybe a photo spread in the gallery would help illustrate these differences.

Lastly I want to go on record stating that when I first wrote back in issue #25 I started my letter with the phrase "man oh man oh man." I see that you have now in your wisdom adopted that as your catch phrase. I think a credit is due at the very least and at the very most a VF copy of All-Star #15..

Francis Litzinger, Toronto, Canada

(1) I really liked the Marvel Masterworks and DC Archival series as well… although they were not cheap to produce. The amount of work that went in to each volume was amazing. The answer to virtually every publishing question is "money." They were likely discontinued because they didn't make enough of it… I miss 'em too, Francis! (2) a pictorial grading standard can be found several places, including the Overstate Grading Guide. (3) I do recall you letter had the phrase "man oh man oh man" and so due credit is hereby given (minus the All-Star #15, of course).

Gone Insane!

What the heck happened? It seems that the "hobby" has become a stompin' grounds for investors, and prices have gotten so very high that there are very few collectors left. Everyone is investing in comic books. What happened to the love of the books?

It seems to me that for the past twenty-five years since the first Overstreet guide comic prices have gone up, up, up and in the last 2-3 years they have gone insane! Are there any true collectors left? If so, what can/should be done to save the hobby. Come on, is a NM-Amazing Fantasy #15 really worth $40,000.00 (to a collector). Isn't this the same type of thing that happened to baseball cards? Has there ever been a price decrease on any comic published prior to 1970?

I see all these ads in our trade and hobby publications "paying top dollar" or something to that effect. I think these are not collectors, just investors. Well, I could go on and on, but I think that you get my drift. I'm sure a lot of CBM readers would agree with me, but I just don't know what should be done… there must be some answer. Anyway, I hope that you and yours are all OK. I've got faith in you, someone gave me a CBM and it looks great! I hope it does really well.

Name withheld by request, New York

I think the hobby is doing just fine! What some think are insane prices for individual books occur in every market… but that doesn't mean the hobby has gone crazy. In fact, the hobby is more stable and widely accepted than ever before. I'd be interested in hearing the opinions of others on this topic. What do you think CBM readers?

Clutching Hand Variant?

Pat Calhoun's unique approach to comic history and which comics are interesting is great, and I especially liked "mid-Fifties Flux" in CBM #35. I have always been intrigued with the Clutching Hand one-shot, and its odd spot in the ACG puzzle. I've been collecting pre-code ACG for several decades now, was wondering if anyone beside myself had come across a color variant of Clutching Hand. One of my copies is distinctly "blue-er" and overall much darker. At first I attributed the differences to sun fading of the lighter copy, but after closer examination by myself and several other collectors, I feel this is not the case. Have you or any of your readers found another of the "darker/blue-er" copies?

(Continued on page 10)

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I read your magazine from cover to cover and I think it is the best one in the comic hobby. A loyal reader

Ron Mason, Pennsylvania

I also find The Clutching Hand to be one of the most interesting ACGs. Your discovery is interesting, Ron. I have never seen a variant copy of CH. Maybe a CBM reader can supply more info on this intriguing anomaly.

More On Hitler Covers

I am writing in response to the enormous amount of letters written about my Hitler article in CBM #31. Many readers are confusing my Hitler checklist with Alan Bartholomew's entry because our features were close together.

I would like to address Andy Townsend's follow-up letter to my article. I still believe Comedy Comics #9 is a Hitler cover for the following reasons: 1) His face is really distorted (being stretched) making his mustache elongated. 2) If you look up Comedy Classics #9 in Overstreet's price guide it says "satire on Hitler and Stalin." Someone who has a copy might check and see if the satire story shows Hitler in a clown suit. Animal Antics #1 is also another questionable satire issue. Imagine a bunny magician pulling a pajama-wearing Hitler out of his hat. Now that's funny! I do agree with Andy Townsend that Hitler's mustache on National Comics #12 is unusual, however I believe the mustache that is there makes Hitler look more scary and insane than the one we usually see him with.

In response to his other Hitler cover finds. I have to disagree with a few of them. Fantastic Comics #22 is technically a Hitler cover, but only because of the Hitler oven. The haircut and pointy nose on the pistol-packing official suggests it's just a regular hate-filled Nazi.

Krazy Komics #9 is more of a satire on Toughy Tomcat than on Hitler (no real resemblance other than a paint on mustache).

Marvel Mystery Comics #64 may be Hitler, it's just too small to tell for sure. For that matter, it may also be General Rommel standing next to him, which looks like the General Rommel on the cover of Human Torch #9.

One other Hitler cover I recently found is Big Shot #25. Other Hitler appearances I've found are in Action Comics #68 and Captain Marvel Adventures #28 (a great story!).

I don't believe we'll ever be able to find all of Hitler's appearances in comics, we're having enough trouble identifying just the cover appearances! Hopefully we can get Overstreet to document all the ones we have found.

West Stephan, California

When Comics Were Comics

Enclosed is my payment for CBM back issues #23, 27, and 32. I would like to take this opportunity to compliment you on what I feel is a well produced and excellent resource for Golden Age and Silver Age collectors. It's a pleasant experience to read about a time when mics were comics, unlike some of the "rags" being passed off for comics in today's market.

Roger E. Dillon, Indiana

Big 5 DC War Guide

You had a letter from Lloyd Duff in Nevada in your May, 1996 issue. He referred to a Guide about the Big Five DC War Comics. I am absolutely rabid to get my hands on this book. Can you give me the address to the Pedrin Conservatory in Redwood City, California, or try to get me info on how to get a hold of this Guide.

You have a great publication, which I greedily read cover to cover every month. Keep up the good work. Thanks!

Chris Clayton, Utah

See Pedrin's ad on page 34. Thanks for all who wrote. Send your correspondence to:

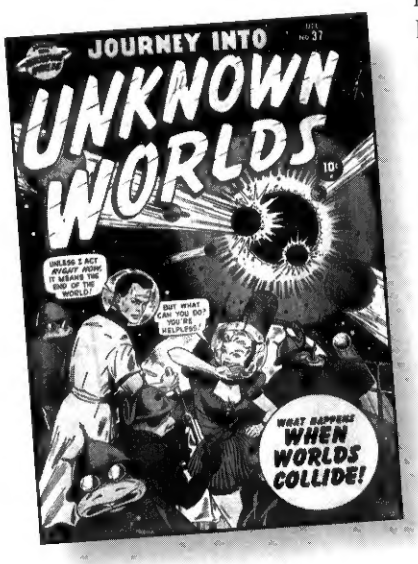
JOURNEY INTO UNKNOWN WORLDS

BY PAT S. CALHOUN

Only one of the long-running Atlas fantasy titles of the 1950s was designed with a science fiction emphasis: *Journey Into Unknown Worlds*. Even though this soon faded into the standard Atlas fantasy format- a mix of SF, fantasy, horror, weird mystery, and suspense stories- the title kept a unique identity. And, perhaps coincidentally, *Journey Into Unknown Worlds* did feature a myriad of memorable sci-fi yarns throughout its run.

The SF themes of the early issues are summed up by the Bill Everett cover for *Journey Into Unknown Worlds* #37 (#2, December 1950). Everett was a key figure in Atlas' transition to fantasy; he also contributed an eight-pager in this ish where the first USA moon rocket lands and discovers Hitler up there building a new reich. The storytelling is a little primitive, but the "short story" narrative was still a new departure for comics- one they would soon perfect.

Journey Into Unknown Worlds #9 (February 1952) is the first issue to fully show this development. "The People Who Couldn't Exist" has spacemen landing on Pluto and finding an old-fashioned Earth town there- populated with their dead friends and relatives. Yes, it's the "predatory planet using hypnosis to trap its prey" plot, but done to a turn- with a last panel that in both words and image transcends any charges of unoriginality. "The Space Man" is older hat- telling of an astronaut's return from a long space voyage to find that decades have gone by on Earth, but it's well and compactly told. "Don't Kill Me Again" has time travel providing seeming safety for a criminal who finds that fate is not constrained by linear sequence. This type of tale was almost an Atlas sub-genre, and this is an exciting example of the way it works. The issue ends on a high note- one of the first Joe Sinnott science fiction stories. "The Four Walls" opens with a superb splash panel of a rocket crash-landing on Mars and tells how the marooned man adapts to the alien environment. Sinnott's crisp and detailed style was always at its best in interplanetary situations, and here, coupled with a good story, the results are classic.



Bill Everett strikes again in *Journey Into Unknown Worlds* #11 (June 1952) with a cool vampire transformation cover and the lead story. "Frankie Was Afraid" starts off another excellent issue with a bravura Everett effort full of fantastic faces and spooky scenes that enliven a familiar yarn of a worm that turns. Then "Kiss of Death" is a neatly executed tale of statues in a park that come to life when moved by mortal emotions. The tasty art is by Bernie Krigstein. The other three stories fill out the ish with enjoyable page-turners.

Journey Into Unknown Worlds #15 (February 1953) has one of the two Dan Keyes/Basil Wolverton collaborations (the other was in #14 and is also spectacular). "They Crawl By Night" is a fantastic fable about what is sane and what is insane as the inmates of an mental asylum are changed to crab monsters. The illustrations are rich and intense with imagination. Also included is a two-page voyage to the end of the universe staged by Stan Lee and Joe Maneely; "The Unknown" is a perfect little parable, and the art is lurid enough to drive the point deeply. Worthwhile too, is "Swampland", with solid art by Jack Keller, a story of two escaped cons and the greed that puts them (literally) at each others' throats.

Journey Into Unknown Worlds #21 (August 1953) is a four-star ish that leads off with a slick Joe Sinnott-drawn sci-fi yarn. The second star is "Someone Isn't There" which mixes mountain climbers– one a psychopath– and a holy old man who hasn't left his cave for many years, but can exert his presence around the mountain. It's most entertaining, and the gritty art matches the murderous mood. Next, Don Rico's three-page surrealistic spoof on "Modern Art" is light-hearted fun. And the finale, "Dead of Winter", features the distinctive inking of Matt Fox in a story of a hapless tourist who finds himself in a town full of zombies. The plot unfolds quickly, and the ending is cleverly chilling, but it is Fox's superlative line-work and dot patterns and crosshatching that make this one special. (Fox's work appears in issues #18, #19, and #22 as well.)

Journey Into Unknown Worlds #24 merits a quick mention for a grimly handsome Sinnott SF effort and a wonderful alien seductress story with dazzling Robert Q. Sale art called "The Voice From Venus".

By the time of *Journey Into Unknown Worlds* #30 (August 1954) the influence of the coming Comics Code can already be felt, with sci-fi and fantasy giving way to realistic settings and psy-

JIUW #37 (#2, Dec 1950) has a classic Bill Everett SF cover. Other companies besides Atlas that started publishing sci-fi comics in 1950 include EC, Avon, DC, and Ziff-Davis.

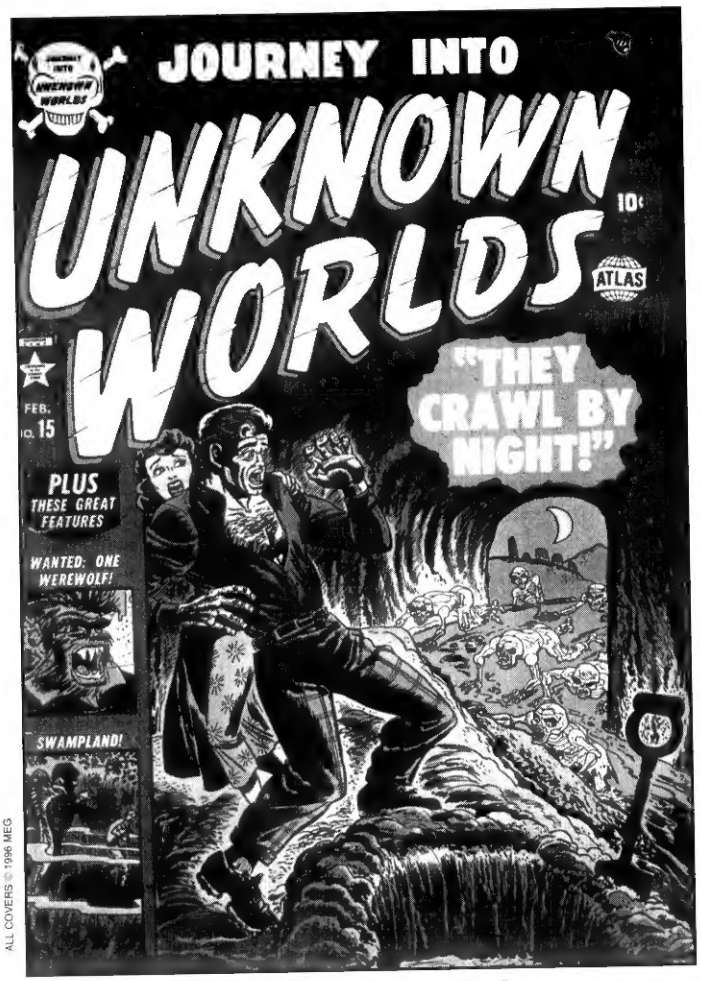
JIUW #15 (Feb 1953) has a cover illustration for "They Crawl By Night" that's creepy enough, but it's the Wolverton art on the tale inside that makes this issue special.

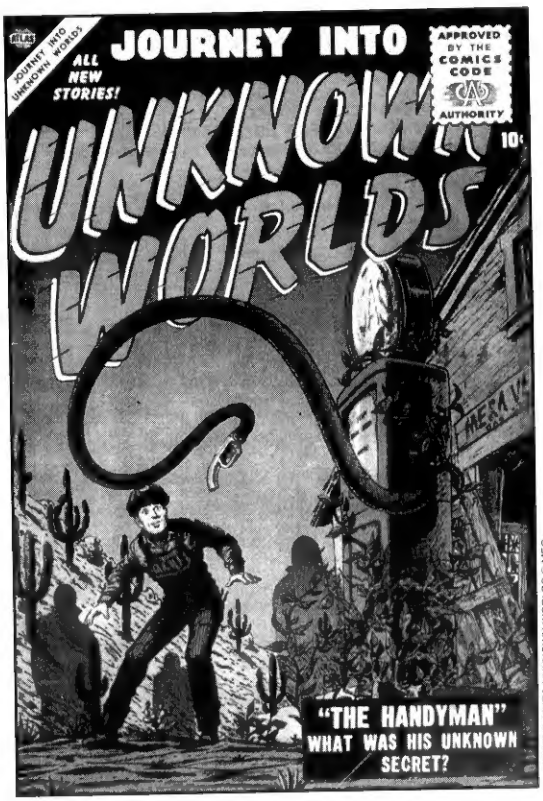
JIUW #48 (Aug 1956) has a sleek but uninvolving Everett cover. Inside are some rewarding efforts featuring art by Gray Morrow, Reed Crandall, and Sid Check.

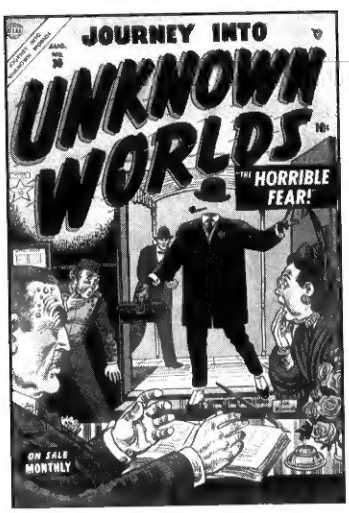
chological angles. While this could yield some fine tales- like this issue's opener- "The Madman", convincingly illustrated by Mort Lawrence, it did tend to make the books a little less colorful. Then Mort Meskin and George Roussos teamed up to give "Reincarnation" a look that helps make up for the tired plot. The next story, "Android", is quite well drawn and packs a political punch as it examines the rights of the synthetic sentient slaves. The last two stories, one an ironic tale of a telepathic boor, and the other that combines a black cat, a box full of money, greed, and death into a smooth package delivered with deft art by Jay Scott Pike, complete the tally of an impressive issue. Oh– and don't forget the terrific Maneely "invisible man" cover...

After the Code came- with the industry reeling and many publishers calling it quits- Atlas stayed strong, but, even there, the creative results betrayed the effects of constraint. Still, an occasional issue would muster a group of satisfying stories. Such an ish is *Journey Into Unknown Worlds* #48 (August 1956). Gray Morrow does a beautiful job on a contemporary "sorcerer's apprentice" script, Reed Crandall draws a ingenious concoction set aboard an 18th-century sailing ship, and Sid Check takes us to that farther shore on yet another voyage to the red planet. And there's a suburban flying saucer story that goes well with Paul Reinman's understated art.

The fatal summer of 1957, when Atlas worked its way into a distribution debacle that devastated the company, claiming long-running fantasy titles like *Astonishing, Marvel Tales, Mystic, Mystery Tales,* and *Uncanny Tales*, also spelled finis for *Journey Into Unknown Worlds*. But the 57-issue run ranks high among the achievements of "fifties fantasy", the decade that stands as the premier era for the genre's expression in comic book form. ■







JIUW #30 (Aug 1954) Shows Joe Maneely achieving a nice blend of humor and horror. Atlas was already toning down material to meet the coming Comics Code.

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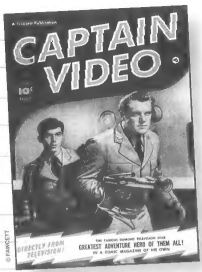
JOURNEY INTO UNKNOWN WORLDS © MEG



Captain Midnight, Captain Video, Captain Science, Commander Battle, Commando Cody, Crusader from Mars, Jet Powers, Rocketman… they all conjure up images of futuristic fears, foibles, and hopes of the early Fifties.

THEY WEREN'T SUPER… THEY WERE SCI-FI!

By Michelle Nolan

WAS IT REALLY NEARLY 50 YEARS AGO THAT CAPTAIN VIDEO and his Video Rangers protected Earth? Can it be that hardly anyone remembers Captain Midnight and the Secret Squadron? Who still reveres Commando Cody, also known as Sky Marshall of the Universe? Do the names Crusader from Mars, Captain Science and Commander Battle still mean anything to anyone?

In the Wake of the Golden Age of Comics, when publishers of the early 1950's tried virtually every character and genre type imaginable, a few highly unusual comic books, television shows, and movie serials were tried in which the hero fought more with super science than super powers, more with mentality than muscles.

Today, these characters are virtually unknown except to a handful of collectors and aging Baby Boomers with faint memories of television shows that ended 40 or more years ago. Their battles were brief and none of them has even the remotest connection with modern life of continuing current characters. But they represented an ideal–that brains, morals and science could foil any menace to the American way of life–that deserves to be remembered. These characters were pretty much the last gasp of the heroic innocence and innocent heroics that filled popular culture in the first half of the 20th century.

Even their names–Captain Midnight, Captain Video, Captain Science, Commander Battle, Commando Cody, Crusader from Mars, Jet Powers, Rocketman–conjure up images of futuristic fears, foibles and hopes of the early Fifties. By the time Sputnik was launched in 1957 as the first earth satellite (can you believe that the 40th anniversary will be next year?) every single one of those heroes was gone. Gone from the comic books, to be replaced in a few years by both revived Golden Age and original icons-to-be from Marvel. Gone from the silver screen, on which serials made their last bow in 1956. Gone from the television studios, which replaced low-budget science fiction heroes with much more modern speculative shows like The Twilight Zone and The Outer Limits.

The idea of the non-super powered character overcoming overwhelming odds has long had an appeal all its own, beginning with Sherlock Holmes and Tarzan, continuing with Zorro and the Lone Ranger, and reaching a logical extension of costumed antics with Batman and the Green Hornet. Add science fiction, super weapons, and fantastic laboratories to the mix, and you have the formula for what passed for wonderful fantasy in the Fifties. It didn't last long, though—the science in the real world made these colorful characters seem dated only a few years after their creation.

Today, people who see an old Captain Midnight television

Continued on page 22

If you've got 'em...
we want 'em!

WANTED - Platinum Age Books!

Paying 100% of Overstreet Comic Guide for any grade VF or better with white pages.

Adventures Of Detective Ace King (1933)
Book 1 Little Nemo (1906)
Buster Brown (Stokes, 1903)
Comic Monthly #1 (Polly & Her Pals, 1922)
Detective Dan (1933)
Gumps, Andy & Min
(Chicago/Morrison Hotel Giveaway, 1920s)
Pore Li'l Mose (1902)
Tailspin Tommy (100 Page hardcover, 1932)
Yellow Kid Magazine #1 (1897)
"The Yellow Kid In McFadden Flats"
(Comic Book, G.W. Dillingham Co., New York, 1897)

WANTED - Golden Age Comics!

Paying 100% of Overstreet Comic Guide for the following Near Mint books with white pages:

Action Comics #1 (1938)
Donald Duck
(Four Color #4, Series 1, 1940)
Gene Autry #1 (Fawcett Publications, 1941)
King Comics #1 (1936)
Looney Tunes & Merry Melodies #1 (1941)
Mickey Mouse ((Four Color #16, Series 1, 1940)
Superman #1 (1939)
Terry And The Pirates
(Libby Radio Premium, 1941)
Walt Disney's Comics & Stories #1 (1940)
Whiz Comics #2 (#1, 1940)

WANTED - Toy Premium Rings!

Paying 100% of Overstreet Ring Guide in VF or better examples of the following:

Bullet Pen Ring (metal, 1940s)
Cisco Kid Secret Compartment Ring (1950s)
Golden Nugget Cave Ring (Casino, 1950s)
Joe DiMaggio Club Ring (1940s)
Joe Lewis Figural Ring (1940s)
Joe Penner Face Puzzle Ring
(Radio Premium, 1940s)
Knights Of Columbus
Secret Compartment Ring
(Radio Premium, 1940s)
Lone Ranger
"Ice Cream" Ring
(Plastic, 1938)
Sky King Kaleidoscope Ring (1940s)
Tom Mix Spinner Ring
(Circus, 1930s)
Whistle Bomb Ring
(Glow-In-The-Dark, 1940s)

WANTED - Toy Premiums!

Paying 200% of Tumbusch Premium Guide for Near Mint:

Cisco Kid Range War Game (1953)
Doc Savage Medal Of Honor (1930s)
Don Winslow Golden Torpedo Decoder (1942)
Dorothy Hart Official Armband Patch
(Sunbrite Jr. Nurse Corp, 1938)
Eagle Decoder (1941)
Green Lama Membership Card (1946)
Jack Armstrong Crocodile Whistle (1941)
Junior JSA Membership Certificate (4 diff., 1940s)
Melvin Purvis Combination Pen & Pencil (1937)
Radio Orphan Annie Glassips (1936)
Red Ryder Decoder (early 1940s)
Rocky Lane Decal Patch (1950)
Sherlock Holmes Map (Household Finance, 1936)
Superman Parachute Rocket (H-O Oats, 1940)
The Flash Color Pinback (1941)
U.S. Jones Cadet Decoder (1941)
Wilma Pendant (1936)

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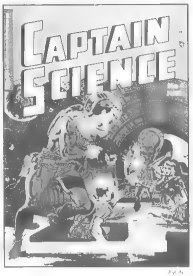
DIAMOND
INTERNATIONAL GALLERIES

Continued from page 20

show or read an old Captain Video comic book are forced to suspend their belief in more ways than one. And if you want to send a 12-year-old into absolute hysterics, there is no better way than to screen an old Commando Cody serial. But it wasn't always thus. Some of us actually sent out for our Secret Squadron membership kits and decoders. If you also recall the thrill of those halcyon days, you just might be fonder of captains and commanders than computers.

Futuristic science fiction was not too common in the comics of the 1940's (Fiction Houses' *Planet Comics* notwithstanding), but as 1950 dawned, comics like *Strange Adventures* and *Strange Worlds* heralded a huge number of science fiction titles over the next three decades — enough, in fact, for widely respected comic historian Mike Benton to write an entire book on them. His *Science Fiction Comics* is the seminal work on the topic. But even that tome concentrated more on the far out and the futuristic than those heros who work in the here and now.

For some of us, there's something truly special about the non-super powered person who uses his wits and ideals. Such characters have an appeal all their own. Freud would probably have had a field day analyzing the difference between those who prefer Captain Video to Captain America. For now, it's enough to know that these super scientists haven't been largely forgotten.



Looking suitably heroic, direct from the television show, are Al Hodges as Captain Video & Don Hastings as the Video Ranger in Captain Video #1 (Feb 1951) from Fawcett.

Captain Video is barely a footnote in comic book history, with six handsome issues from Fawcett in 1951 and no other appearances. These six comics, however, are among the most collectible of the era, with an appeal far exceeding that of most issues of the period. The estimable George Evans did almost all the art, often with an assist from the young Al Williamson.

The good Captain and his aide, the Video Ranger, battled evil on Earth and in outer space, especially the menace of the mad scientist Dr. Pauli. These stories are better plotted than the much more famous television series, which originated on the old Dumont TV Network in 1949. For the first few months the series star was Richard Coogan who was replaced by Al Hodge (the jut-jawed hero of the Fawcett photo front and back covers on issues #1, 2, 5 and 6). The television series ran nationally in several incarnations until the demise of Dumont halfway through the decade. It's probably the best remembered science fiction series of the 1950's, even though it was far from the best. There's just something about the name—Captain Video. More than a few video stores popped up with that name three decades later.

A Wally Wood cover and two stories teaming Wood with Joe Orlando make *Captain Science* #4 (Jun 1951) from Avon a highly collectible issue.

Two Martian Lovers were punished by being sent to Earth to fight evil in the unusual two-issue series *Crusader From Mars* from Ziff-Davis. This is #2, Fall 1952.

I have much fonder memories of Captain Midnight, a really strong grade-B television series that initially ran from 1954-56. I never missed an episode... enthralled by the image of the redoubtable Richard Webb, who probably put more of himself into a kids' television show than any actor save Clayton "The Lone Ranger" Moore and George "Superman" Reeves.

Captain Midnight, who originated on the radio in 1940, seemed totally genuine, like a guy who really could come to our rescue. We all knew that Superman was a fantasy, but Captain Midnight resonated with the possibility that the Secret Squadron might even include one of us someday. Ovaltine sponsored the show. I couldn't stand Ovaltine! and that may have something to do with the fact that there was no Captain Midnight comic book during the run of the television show. Fawcett's 67-issue run of the costumed scientist adventurer ended in 1948, but I never saw an issue until several years after the TV show went off the air. I recall being stunned that one of my favorite childhood TV heroes had his own comicbook in the Golden Age! Captain Midnight thus became one of the few heroes with a comicbook that was cancelled long before the television show ever began. Strange. I'm sure a Captain Midnight comicbook would have sold well during the 1950s. Or would it? By that time, as I said, the scientist-hero was vanishing.

Two other super scientists got their own short-lived comics and their own costumes in 1950—Captain Science and Jet Powers. Their adventures on Earth and outer space could not have been more fantastical, even though neither character had super powers. They were an odd pair—they combined an up-to-date science fiction theme with the raw energy and non-sensical plots that characterized the Golden Age super heroes of a decade earlier. In short, their comics aren't as good as some have made them out to be, but they're pure fun anyway.

Captain Science #1 (November 1950) from Youthful Magazines, tells the story of a dying alien named Knur who crashlands his flying saucer on Earth and gifts scientist Gordon Dane and teenage protege Rip Gary with a mechanical brain. The story is oddly similar in some ways to the

origin of the Silver Age Green Lantern in 1959. The first issue also has a science fiction story with early Wally Wood art, some of his first in comics.

Wood also did the covers for #4 and 5 and teamed with Joe Orlando to produce Captain Science stories in each issue, making these among the most collectible science fiction comics of the period. The stories are pure space opera of the most outrageous sort. *Captain Science* became *Fantastic* with #8, but even that issue included one final Captain Science story, leaving us with 15 stories in all.

Interestingly, at about the same time as *Captain Science* hit the stands, Magazine Enterprises came out with *Jet* #1, which featured the adventures of Jet Powers and Space Ace, characters that originated in the late 1940s ME crime title *Manhunt*. Jet Powers, nicely drawn by the prolific Bob Powell through the character's four-issue run, was billed as "Captain of Science" on the splash page of issue #1. One can only wonder if that was to be his original name. At any rate, all four issues of Jet are collectible. Issues #3 and 4 feature gorgeous Williamson/Evans Space Ace stories. Ironically, the title became *Space Ace* (a one-shot) with #5. This odd fifth issue is filled with reprints from the Manhunt series drawn in the 1940ish style by Fred Guardineer, the artist who gained his greatest fame with Zatara the Magician in *Action Comics*.

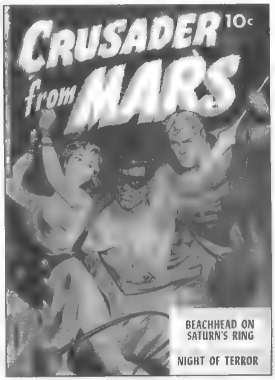
Two of the most original characters in the category of the scientific superman were Commander Battle, which ran seven issues in 1954-55 from ACG, and Crusader from Mars, which ran two issues from Ziff-Davis in 1952. The characters are super only in the heroic sense, but the plots are so outrageous that they're pure fun.

Commander Battle was actually entitled *Commander Battle and the Atomic Sub*, and I suspect that ACG editor/writer Richard Hughes came up with the idea to take advantage of the huge publicity involving the launching of the Nautilus, the first real atomic-powered submarine. For a time, the Atomic Sub became the Atomic Spaceship. These stories involved a truly weird mishmash of spies and alien invaders. The first issue was done in the black-border TrueVision process that ACG used to imitate 3-D effects for a few issues of most of its titles. The title disappeared with the ACG "implosion" in mid-1955.

Commander Battle and his crew bore an uncanny resemblance to four characters introduced only a year and a half after Captain Battle ended—National Comics' Challengers of the Unknown by Jack Kirby, which made their debut in *Showcase* #6 (February 1957)). Ace, Red, Rocky and Prof of the Challengers had their predecessors in the atomic submarine's daredevil crew of William "Bill" Battle, World War II ace; David "Champ" Ruggles, red-haired boxing and wrestling champ; "Tony" Gardello the Great, carnival escape artist; and Dr. Edwin "Doc" Blake, famed physicist. This foursome, not the Challengers, actually can claim to be the first new "super team" to come along since the temporary demise of National's Justice Society in 1951. I can't help wondering if this title inspired the creation of the Challengers.

It was a shame that *Crusader From Mars*, written by Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel, ran only two issues. The idea was unique, at least for the time—a Martian man named Tarka and his Lover, a woman named Zira, were sent to Earth to fight evil as penance for their crime on Mars. It seems that Mars had not had any crime until Tarka killed his rival for Zira's affections. Well! The most bizarre of the four Crusader from Mars stories involves hooded criminals who kidnap Zira. Tarka zips to her rescue, banishes the hooded hoodlums and takes the leader back to Mars to dig canals as punishment! That story notwithstanding, this series had real possibilities, but it ended almost before it began because Ziff-Davis went out of the comic business and St. John, which bought many of its titles, did not pick up the loving Crusaders.

BOTTOM OF PAGE: **Bob Powell's fine art highlights the Jet Powers stories in *Jet* #3 (1951) from ME. This comic also featured a beautiful Space Ace story by Evans/Williamson.**



One comic that does not belong to this category of the super scientist, but which is sometimes included, is the Farrell one-shot title *Rocketman* dated June, 1952. This truly bizarre comic might be the most out-of-place issue of its era. All four stories, including the three adventures of a futuristic space hero referred to only as Rocketman, are drawn so crudely and written so poorly that it's hard to believe this comic book actually appeared on the stands next to the likes of *Superman*, *Donald Duck* and *Weird Science*.

Among the few mistakes in Benton's fine book on science fiction comics is the entry for this odd *Rocketman* title, for which the cover has no bearing on the insides. The book listing confuses this title with the character who appeared in several Chesler titles of the 1940s (and who was reprinted in the two issues of *Zip-Jet* comics from St. John in 1953). The book's

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entry says "...this title reprises the 1940s Rocketman superhero," but the comic that did that was *Zip-Jet*, which is not listed but should have been. The entry also states that Cal Martin as Rocketman invents a rocket backpack in *Scoop Comics* #1 (November 1941), "...nearly three years before the Republic Pictures Saturday morning serial King of the Rocketman," apparently getting that incorrect information from the incorrect entry in Jeff Rovin's *Encyclopedia of Super Heroes*, which listed that Republic hero's debut as 1945 when it should have been 1949.

Commando Cody, a Republic creation whose short-lived 1955 television/theatrical half-hour serial series used the same flying suit featured in three regular Republic serials, was the last of the super scientists. Remember those controls on the flying suit that said "Up," "Down," "Fast," and "Slow"? Life was really simpler then, even for the guys who saved the world! ■

Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from the '40s through the '60s. She has one of the most extensive collections of 1950's comic books in the United States. In real life Michelle works as a freelance journalist.

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ALL STAR
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10 GD+ $375
13 VG- $450
14 FR/GD $175
19 GD/VG $290
19 GD $175
21 GD/VG $235
25 VG+ $300
28 VG $240
31 VG- $215
32 GD+ $140
34 VG- $195
45 (scarce) .....
VG+ $225
46 VG- $195
53 VG/FN $285
53 VG $225

BATMAN
3 GD+ $870
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6 VG $700
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9 VG- $650
10 VG+ $675
16 (1st Alfred) .....
FR+ $375
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20 VG $300
22 GD/VG $175
23 (Joker cover) .....
VG $375
24 FR $70
25 (Joker/Penguin) .....
GD $175
30 VG $240
31 VG+ $190
33 GD/VG $175
35 GD+ $115
36 GD+ $115
41 GD $70
43 VG $170
44 (Joker cover) .....
FR+ $100
45 GD- $60
49 VG $290
53 FR/GD $58
58 GD+ $590
63 GD $60
64 FR $330
67 GD/VG $80
72 GD/VG $80
73 GD- $70
76 GD/VG $80
91 GD $40
92 VG- $85
96 GD- $35
102 GD- $40

DETECTIVE
53 VG $240
54 GD/VG $175
63 VG+ $265
73 (Scarecrow) .....
GD/VG $150
85 (Joker cover .....)
VG+ $275
88 VG- $135
91 GD+ $140
107 GD $65
115 VG- $115
116 VG- $115
119 GD $65
125 FR/GD $48
133 GD+ $75
139 VG $100
149 (Joker cover) .....
GD- $70
152 GD+ $75
158 GD+ $70
167 GD+ $80
171 GD- $70
190 (Origin retold)
VG- $115
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197 GD $38
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14 GD/VG $165
16 VG $225
17 GD $110
19 VG $225
28 (scarce) .....
GD/VG $160
34 VG $195

SUPERMAN
16 GD/VG $200
19 VG- $250
21 GD/VG $160
32 VG- $180
24 (Flag cover .....)
VG- $265
25 VG $210
27 GD $100
30 (1st Mr. Mxy) .....
GD $150
31 VG $170
34 VG- $155
35 GD/VG $125
38 GD+ $205
39 VG+ $205
41 FR/GD $48
42 VG $125
47 GD/VG $95
48 VG $125
49 VG $125
53 (Origin retold) .....
GD+ $290
55 VG- $100
57 GD/VG $80
59 VG- $95
60 GD/VG $80
61 (1st Kryptonite)
GD+ $150
64 GD/VG $80
65 VG/FN $130
66 GD $50
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98 GD/VG $55
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[illegible]			
[illegible] Western			
[illegible] Animals			
A[illegible]n Arrow			
Batman			
Big Town			
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Boomerang			
Brave and Bold			
Buzzy			
Captain Storm			
Challengers of the Unknown			
Dale Evans			
Date w Debbie			
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DC 100-pg Super			
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DC Special			
Debbie's Dates			
The Demon			

TITLE	S	I	P
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DODO & Frog			
Doom Patrol			
Falling in Love			
The Flash			
Fippity & Flop			
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Funny Faces			
Funny Stuff			
Gang Busters			
GI Combat			
Girls Love			
Stories			
Girls Romances			
Green Lantern			
Hawkman			
Heart Throbs			
Hopalong Cassidy			
House of Mystery			
House of Secrets			
Jackie Gleason & the Honeymooners			
Justice League of America			
Kamandi			
Leading Screen Comics			
Leave it to Binky			
Love Stories			

TITLE	S	I	P
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Metal Men			
Metamorpho			
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Mister Miracle			
Movie Town			
Ambos			
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New Gods			
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Our Fighting Forces			
Peter Panda			
Peter Porkchops			
Phantom			
Stranger			
Plastic Man			
Raccoon Kids			
Real Screen Comics			
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TITLE	S	I	P
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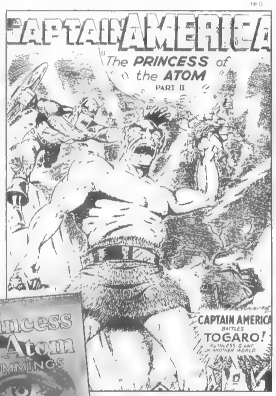
SUB-ATOMIC SOJOURN

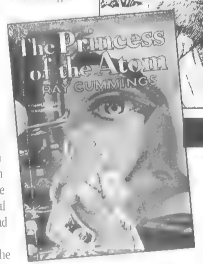
The story begins in 1929, continues in 1943, climaxes in 1962, and still hasn't ended yet... In 1929 Ray Cummings, a popular pulp fiction writer in several genres, wrote a story called "The Princess of the Atom", for Argosy *All-Story Weekly*. This fantastic yarn fired the public imagination with the concept of "worlds within worlds" and virtually spawned the whole "sub-atomic" science fiction sub-genre.

I first came in contact with this story in an unexpected place. In 1962, as a young teenager, I somehow got hold of a copy of *Captain America* #26 (May 1943). The book opened with Part Two of a story called "The Princess of the Atom". It was many years before I eventually acquired Part One in issue #25, but, even so, Part Two was the most exciting Golden Age comic book story I had ever read!

Here was a story that took Cap beyond Nazis or Japanese saboteurs or even the Red Skull into a sub-atomic world for a sci-fi adventure and one of the weirdest alien invasions of the Golden Age.

Both installments of the story totaled a whopping 46 pages! "Dianne, the princess of an atom world", comes to Earth to enlist Cap's help in a war back on her planet- a war against the invading armies of Togaro. But when she takes the size-changing drug to get big enough to be seen by humans, she unwittingly brings Togaro and his monstrous henchmen with her, and they begin a reign of terror along the Maine coastline.





by Jeff Gell

As the story progresses, Cap and Bucky shrink down to the atom world to tackle Togaro on his own turf. There, they "duke it out" in an exciting fight sequence, beautifully rendered by artists Syd Shores and Vince Alascia- the team that took over from Simon and Kirby and kept alive the tradition of vivid visual action that Cap's creators had established.

Togaro, truly one of the great comics villains, dooms his own world by causing his spaceship to grow in size until the planet cannot support it and it falls off its axis, sliding towards the sun. But Cap also growing gigantic, gathers up the population of the atom world onto his enormous shield and carries them to a spaceship so that they can escape the planetary catastrophe. Then, back on Earth, Cap and Togaro clash again, in a no-holds-barred battle that spans several pages and is choreographed for maximum excitement. Cap finally triumphs, when Togaro smashes against a cliff, and apparently dies as his body shrivels back to its original small size. Dianne, the atom princess, remains on Earth, perhaps with the editorial thought of a sequel, although, to my knowledge, one never occurred.

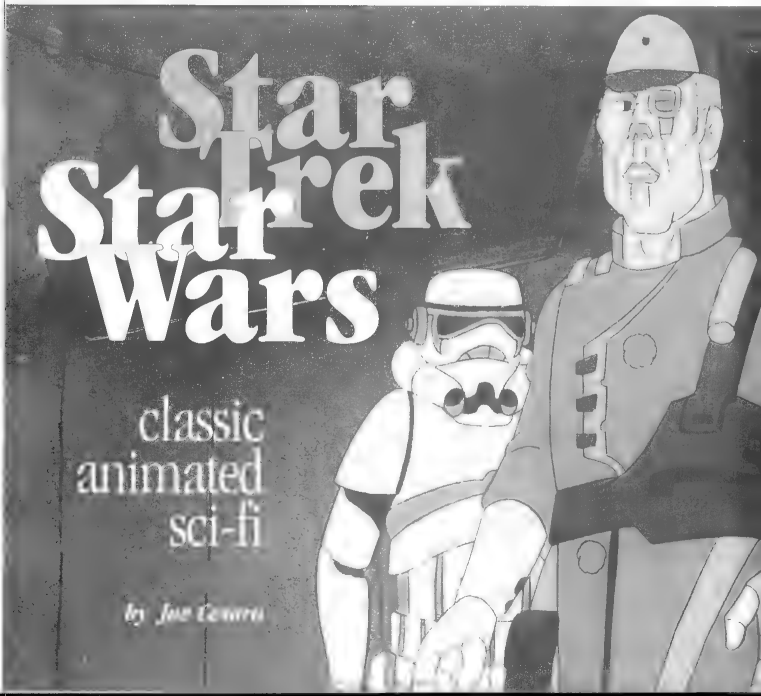
That the characters grow and shrink by taking drugs, perhaps mirrors Alice in Wonderland more than it does the American subculture of the late-1960s. But the similarity is there: as Cap says to the inventor, "Make sure you destroy those drugs. They could wreck the world!" Amen!

The folks at Timely were almost as excited about this story as I was. They even ran a "coming next issue" ad in *Cap* #24 saying that the story was "by the author of Princess of the Atom". I'm not sure if this means that Ray Cummings himself wrote the adaptation, but it's possible. Many of the old pulpsters finished their careers working on comic books as the pulp market dwindled. Maybe Stan Lee did the translation. But, certainly, someone at Timely had read and liked the original novel, and arranged things so that they could publish a comic book version.

It's impossible for any summary to do justice to the "sense of wonder" this story inspired in me; the first time I read it can only be described as a "mind-blowing" experience. It was the most exciting thing I'd ever read; and soon I "adapted" the story myself in one of my early self-drawn "mini-comics". It also sent me searching for other books by Ray Cummings, but I never found anything that came close to the imaginative power of *The Princess of the Atom*.

The novel was reprinted in paperback by Avon in 1950, as part of their "Fantasy Classics" series. It's an attractive edition and is well worth seeking out for any who want to experience the original terrific tale. *Cap* #25 and #26 however, have never been reprinted, and while I'd love to see the Cap "Princess of the Atom" as a graphic novel, this is an unlikely dream. Meanwhile, I still have my tattered copies to enjoy before they crumble into dust... and I plan to visit the sub atomic world again and again in the years to come. ■

While almost everyone is familiar with the Star Trek television series and movies, as well as the Star Wars film trilogy, few have had the pleasure of watching both of these classic creations in their animated form. Whether due to bias, or the fact that both series had only brief appearances on television, fans of these two powerhouses rarely have had an opportunity to truly appreciate these wonderful cartoons. It's a shame too, because the animated Star Trek and Star Wars are two of the greatest Science Fiction series ever produced!



Both animated series were created after they had gained popularity in other mediums by the fabled, masterminds, Gene Roddenberry (Star Trek), and George Lucas (Star Wars). Both, at one time or another, had dreamed of making an animated cartoon, but their motivations for making these particular cartoons were quite different.

Roddenberry's hand was forced, and he chose the animated route to keep his Star Trek dream alive. After the unfortunate cancellation of the original Star Trek series, Gene Roddenberry pleaded with NBC to bring the series back. With an ever increasing number of Star Trek conventions, unprecedented support from fans, renewed media interest, and a ready and willing original cast, NBC and Paramount decided to bring Star Trek back. However, due to the budget restrictions placed

(LEFT) **Admiral Screed and the Storm troopers are planning to take the treasure from Mungo in the name of the Empire. This cel is from part III of "The Adventures of Mungo Baobab" and is titled "Across the Roon Sea." The episode is set on the planet Roon in the Umboo territory... the home of Auren Yomm and her family.**

(BELOW) **Episode 23 "Counter Clock Incident" finds Mr. Spock in the laboratory of Karl Four, a scientist on the planet Arret. The population of this planet are born old and grow younger, dying in infancy. The crew of the Enterprise suddenly finds themselves affected in the same way.**

on Roddenberry, the show could only return in animated form.

Star Trek - the Animated Series featured the voices of William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, James Doohan, George Takei, DeForest Kelley, Majel Barrett, and Nichelle Nichols. This historic event brought back the original cast for the first time since the original show's cancellation. The series was produced by the prestigious Filmation Studios, who beat out fierce competition (which included the famous Hanna-Barbera Studios) for the right to animate Star Trek.

The series was designed and written for an adult audience and was originally slated to be aired at night and in prime-time. However, animation at that time was thought to be only for children, leaving Star Trek

(LEFT) Auren Womm, Mungo Baobab, and R2D2 search for Roonstone treasure. (BELOW) C3PO and R2D2 make for the Umboo trading post riding a "lesser mogo" a beast of burden on the planet Roon.

stuck in the vast "wasteland" of Saturday morning cartoons. Even with this setback, the animated Star Trek found an eager audience. The animated series was both a critical success and ratings victory, and was honored with an Emmy Award for "Best Children's Television Series" in 1975 for the episode "Sharper Than a Serpents Tooth". In spite of all this good fortune, after NBC fulfilled its two year, 22 episode commitment, the show was abruptly canceled... and then never to be heard from again. (For more information on the animated Star Trek, see *CBM* #24)

Animated Star Wars!

Always a big fan of cartoons, George Lucas had given it much thought in the past and was determined to fulfill one of his dreams. At one point he even toyed with the idea of doing Star Wars as an animated movie instead of a live action film. After the phenomenal success of the live action film "Star Wars" he finally decided to do a 12 minute "test" sequence during the Star Wars Christmas special, which aired on ABC in 1978. While some suggest that the special was not a highlight in Lucasfilm history, all agree the animated segment was well done and definitely worth watching. Today, the animated segment has even become a cult classic for many Star Wars fans

The animated sequence featured the "core" cast of the first Star Wars movie, including the characters and actual voices of Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Chewbacca, Princess Lea, Darth Vader, R2D2, and C3PO. The plot of this rarely seen and highly regarded 12 minutes was of great importance to Star Wars fans because it served as the prologue to the upcoming second installment of the trilogy, "The Empire Strikes Back". More importantly though, it introduced one of today's most popular Star Wars characters, Boba Fett- the bounty hunter.

But the 12 minute sequence is not the end of the animated Star Wars story! When the trilogy was completed and no new Star Wars films were planned until the making of the next trilogy, George Lucas focused his attention on Star Wars in animated form again. Riding the success of "Return Of The Jedi" Lucasfilm decided to venture back into the animated field and to develop two new series for Saturday morning television (featuring characters from the Star Wars movies).

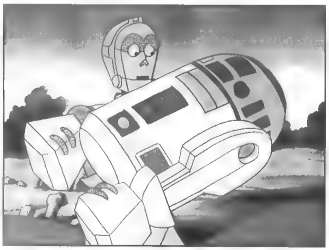
It was decided that both series were to use central characters from the movies, but not characters that were essential for or tied to the actual plots. They chose to do a series about the Droids (R2D2, and C3PO) and a series about the Ewoks. Both choices consisted of enormously popular characters and both were naturals for animation. George Lucas was instrumental in developing the premises for both animated series. Not only did Lucas edit stories and oversee the actual animation, he also spared no expense to insure the quality of the show.

The average cost of each episode was a whopping $300,000! This made Ewoks and Droids two of the most expensive Saturday morning cartoons ever produced. Both "Droids: The Adventures of R2D2 and C3PO," and "Ewoks" appeared Saturday mornings on ABC, premiering during the fall television season of 1985.

The Ewoks & The Droids

The Ewoks series was based on the muppet-like creatures lives on Endor before they were invaded by the evil Empire. The series featured the heroes from "Return of the Jedi", the small but brave scout Wicket... plus his friends Princess Kneesaa, Latara, Paploo, Teebo, and others. Each animated episode revolved around a theme of family, friendship, and community.

The Droid's animated series featured R2D2 and C3PO in the time before the rise of the Empire and the beginning of the Star Wars Saga (probably before they meet Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia). These tales are told from the robots point of view and are about their lives with other owners. Each half hour episode is a complete story, but represents part of an on going story, thus forming a "serialization" rarely done in



a cartoon format. Other special contributors to the Droids series were Anthony Daniel who reprised his role as the voice of C3PO, and three-time Academy Award winner Ben Burtt (sound effects for Star Wars, Indiana Jones, and E.T.)

The stories themselves are also similar to those of Star Wars in that they feature villains hell-bent on creating their own evil empire and conquering the galaxy. Standouts in this category include villains like Sise Fromm (who looks a little like Jabba the Hut), Gaff, (a Kobali who put his victims to sleep with one scratch of his spine), and Admiral Screed (a cybernetic commander of one of the Empire's starfleets). Along with good stories, these new villains make this an interesting and entertaining series to behold.

Collecting The Cels

While the Star Trek and Star Wars cartoons are fairly recent productions, finding quality images of and reputable sources for these animated classics can be a challenge.

In the case of the animated Star Trek series, the challenge relates to the fact that the series was created before the art was considered collectible. In the early 1980's, much of the art was actually discarded to save space, unlike the routinely saved animation art of today. This is the reason why cels with key characters and good setups are so scarce and can cost thousands.

Likewise, the prospect of collecting Star Wars animation cels is tempered by several factors as well. First, the Star Wars Christmas special was only 12 minutes long, so there is a limited amount of art to begin with. Second (and only making matters worse), almost all the art for this special was destroyed. The surviving pieces and remaining few cels and backgrounds from this cult classic are now part of a traveling exhibition of Star Wars memorabilia shown in the Smithsonian and other museums across the country (and are not readily available for sale).

Running entire seasons, Droids (13 episodes) and Ewoks (26 episodes), required the production of much more art… but unfortunately this art is also hard to obtain. The Ewoks whole first season was destroyed and no art is known to exist. The art for the second season is readily available, but the original backgrounds are scarce, and unfortunately many of the drawings were destroyed during shipping.

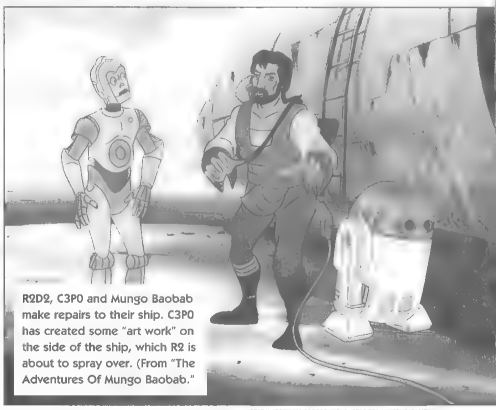
Most of the art from the first ten episodes of The Droids (which only ran one season) was also thrown out or destroyed. The art from the remaining episodes is available, but finding quality cels, backgrounds, and drawings can be difficult. Animation art and collectibles dealers are always in search of these elusive pieces of Sci-Fi history.

Tapping the great demand, Paramount and Lucasfilm have both licensed hand-painted limited editions and limited edition seri-cels from the animated series. These classic cels can be found at local comic shops and art galleries.

With the explosion in animation art market, Star Trek and Star Wars cels may be hold "untapped" possibilities. This is a justifiable prediction, especially considering the recent frenzy over much more recently produced animation art (e.g. material from TV shows like the "Simpsons" and from blockbuster movies like "The Lion King," and "Pochahontas") It's just possible that animation art is on the "cusp" of a new Golden Age of collectibility.

The Final Chapter

It's clear that cartoons and cartoon art are no longer just for kids. The proof of this is the record numbers of adults who avidly seek out the original cels from the shows and films featuring their favorite animated characters. Star Trek and Star Wars animation art is often an especially sought after part of this collectibles field. This demand, combined with the fact that original art from both these classic series hard-to-find, contribute to ever increasing collector interest.



R2D2, C3P0 and Mungo Baobab make repairs to their ship. C3P0 has created some "art work" on the side of the ship, which R2 is about to spray over. (From "The Adventures Of Mungo Baobab."

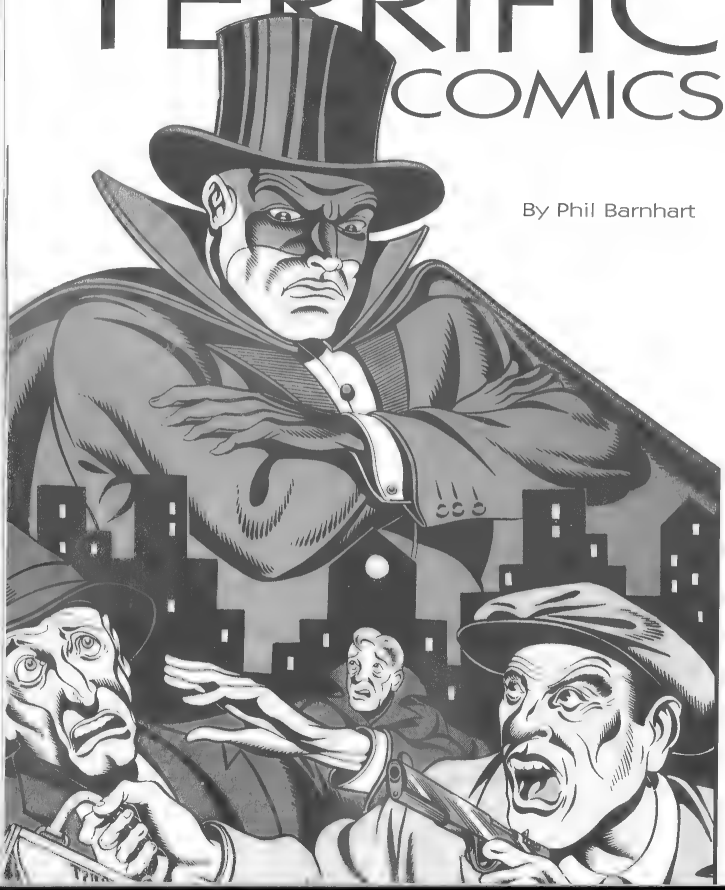
STAR WARS ©1996 GEORGE LUCAS STAR TREK ©1996 PARAMO...

But beyond the concerns of the collectibles market is the love of fans for these incredible cartoons no longer found on network television. But the light of hope still shines. Luckily, cable TV has resurrected these animated gems and the work, creativity, and genius that was put into them will not be forgotten. Through the magic of syndication, old fans as well as new will get to appreciate the beloved familiar characters and the interesting new ones. A whole "next generation" will get to see and appreciate the wondrous animated fantasies… Star Trek and Star Wars! ■

TEMERSON'S SECOND TIER TITLE

TERRIFIC COMICS

By Phil Barnhart



TERRIFIC COMICS WAS ONE OF PUBLISHER FRANK TEMERSON'S SECOND TIER TITLES FOR ET-ES-GO MAGAZINES. IT WAS THE SISTER PUBLICATION TO THEIR FLAGSHIP TITLE *SUSPENSE COMICS*. BEGINNING IN JANUARY 1944 AND RUNNING CONSECUTIVELY ON ALTERNATING MONTHS WITH *SUSPENSE COMICS*. *TERRIFIC COMICS* RAN FOR ONLY SIX ISSUES BEFORE ENDING IN NOVEMBER OF 1944. ET-ES-GO MAGAZINES WAS ANOTHER VENTURE INTO THE COMIC BUSINESS BY OWNER AND PUBLISHER FRANK TEMERSON. HE ESTABLISHED HIS PRESENCE EARLY IN THE INDUSTRY WHEN HE PURCHASED BOTH THE COMICS MAGAZINE COMP. AND THE CHESLER LINES IN 1937. THEN SELLING THEM BOTH TO CENTAUR PUBLISHING IN 1938. HE AGAIN RETURNED TO THE COMIC BUSINESS IN 1940 WITH *CRASH COMICS*. THIS TIME AS TEM PUBLISHING. BY 1941 HE HAD FOUND SUCCESS WITH CATMAN

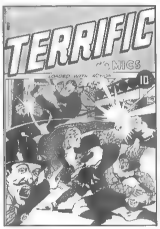
Temerson changed the name of the company to Holyoke Publishing with the debut of his new title, *Cat-Man Comics*. Shortly thereafter the name of the company was changed to Et-Es-Go Magazines, named after Temerson's three sisters Etta, Esther, and Goldie. In 1942, L.B. Cole was hired as editor and art director. This event eventually precipitated the final name change of the company to Continental Magazines in July of 1944.

The same individuals responsible for scripting and illustrating on the other Et-Es-Go/Continental Magazine titles were prevalent in *Terrific Comics* as well. They were Nina Albright, Jack Alderman, L.B. Cole, Bob Fujitani, Jack Grogan, Rudy Palais, Don Rico, Alex Schomburg (covers only), and Manny Stallman to name but a few. They were some of the best the industry had to offer.

Unlike the macabre tales presented in *Suspense Comics*, *Terrific Comics* offered more adventuresome fare. The stories were loaded with action and based more on "real life" situations. Characters like Kid Terrific, a down on his luck washed-up prize fighter or leather pusher (as he was often referred to) and Jimmie, a street urchin looking for a mentor and friendship. The two of them take up with a traveling carnival and embark on a series of "thrill-packed" episodes, each set in the different towns the carnival visits. The daring duo of Kid Terrific and Jimmie are featured as the lead story in every issue of *Terrific Comics*, and on the first four covers as well.

Another mainstay character to the lineup was the Mighty Juggernaut, defender of the weak and protector of the helpless. This crusader of crime comes from the vast expanse of the frozen north to thwart the evil doers of the Yukon. In the logging camps of the north woods, there is a familiar cry when trouble threatens. The Mighty Juggernaut is always there to answer pleas for help with his thundering fists.

Less popular (and always the last story) but still considered a regular feature were the characters of Buck Jordan and Broncho Boyd. Buck 'N Broncho teamed up for globe trotting excursions in the pursuit of the latest footage as newsreel cameramen for Supreme News. Their seemingly endless search for news took them everywhere from the mysterious



ABOVE: Kid Terrific smashes the plans of would be saboteurs on #3. This is L.B. Cole's first published cover. LEFT: Kid Terrific comes out swinging on the cover of the scarce first issue of *Terrific Comics*. FOLLOWING PAGE-TOP: Schomburg's only other cover for this title features Kid Terrific and a German U-Boat crew (#2). FOLLOWING PAGE-BOTTOM: A rare house ad which appeared in *Terrific* #3.

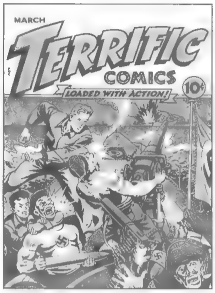
Casbah in Algiers to the tropics of the Asian theater. Their adventures often found the two of them narrowly escaping with their lives as they just manage to outwit the Nazis or Japanese.

The influence of WWII is reflected in the covers of *Terrific Comics* #2, 3, and 4. Schomburg's German U-Boat shelling a U.S. naval fleet, L.B. Cole's portrayal of saboteurs about to derail a train loaded with American tanks, and Rudy Palais' graphic depiction of a bullet through the head of a Japanese pilot all invoke the same patriotic sentiment that was so prevalent on the home front. Banners on story pages urged everyone to do their part for victory with slogans like "They give their lives, you lend your money!", or "Buy war bonds and bye-bye Hitler!"

Boomerang

With America's involvement in the war against the Axis powers a patriotic hero was added as a regular feature. Boomerang was first introduced in *Terrific Comics* #2 by L.B. Cole. He is really Captain Lloyd Raleigh of US Army Intelligence. In his first assignment he is to eliminate Hugo Drutz, headsman for the Fuehrer and nicknamed "The Butcher of Berlin!" Boomerang flies a Messerschmitt into Berlin in the guise of a

Nazi officer. Meanwhile, in a nearby dungeon, the imprisoned await their fate at the blade of Drutz. Soon after his arrival Boomerang dons his costume and as you might suspect dispatches the Nazi guards with a few well placed throws of his boomerangs. Before escaping with one of the more shapely prisoners (a British agent named Diana) he fulfills his primary mission by pumping a slug into Drutz. Then Boomerang and Diana team up to battle the Third Reich together!



Closer to home we find Molly O'Moore and Scoop Scanlon, rival newspaper reporters for The Chronicle and The Daily World Star. They stumble into one hair-raising incident after another as each tries to beat the other to a story. Each adventure usually ends with Scoop saving Molly from another gang of thugs and missing his own byline in the process. These same characters moved on to *Catman Comics* once *Terrific Comics* was discontinued. This continuing anthology was faithfully crafted by Nina Albright.

The same is true of Bob Fujitani's characters, The Reckoner and Chipper. Once the *Terrific* title was abandoned, they also moved on to *Catman Comics*. The Reckoner is the alter ego of Michael Shayne the Cabbie, and Chipper is his young champion. Oddly enough, Chipper had no alter ego or disguise for his crime fighting persona. In spite of this minor detail vigilant and watchful eyes are kept by the Reckoner and Chipper as they cruise a great metropolis at night in a sleek taxicab . . . keeping the streets safe from the evil lurking in its shadows.

TERRIFIC VALUES

	GD	FN
#1	$350	$1,200
#2	$250	$750
#3	$300	$800
#4	$200	$700
#5	$850	$3,500
#6	$200	$750

The Fillers

In addition to the regular features, filler stories were often used to round out a particular issue. One of the more interesting and noteworthy stories is L.B. Cole's tale of "True Personal Adventure" in *Terrific Comics* #2. It is a story about four sailors trapped in a leaky compartment below water level for two and a half days and the ingenuity they used to survive when their ship was bombed at Salerno.

One other filler story important to the continuity of a key character was found in *Terrific Comics* #1. This story featured a very early incarnation of a character that became the central element in many of L.B. Cole's later cover compositions for *Suspense Comics*, Mr. Nobody! Even though this early incarnation of Mr. Nobody lacked the surreal intelligence, the trademark trench coat and fedora so important to the persona of this character, it does mark the first appearance of Mr. Nobody at Et-Es-Go/Continental.

Hens Teeth

The issue which generates the most interest for collectors is *Terrific Comics* #5. Many argue that it is second only to Schomburg's masterpiece, *Suspense Comics* #3. Both of these books are vintage Schomburg, where every square inch is jam packed with detailed action. Although every issue in this series is considered scarce or rare, the real "hens tooth" is *Terrific Comics* #3. Keep in mind that this issue hit the stands the month after *Suspense* #3. These two issues even share the same back cover ad. "How To Write Love Letters."

After November of 1944, *Terrific Comics* was discontinued. Et-Es-Go/Continental decided to focus their efforts on the *Suspense* and *Catman* titles. What marked the final issue for this title also marked a beginning. *Terrific Comics* #6 was the first in a series of what would later be considered some of the finest work in L.B. Cole's distinguished career. The "posterized color cover" that was conceived in that last issue was just a start of things to come. ■

This article was submitted to CBM *by The Comic Archives, a shoppe dedicated to comic history and nostalgia!*

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Since 1983...America's Foremost Dealer to Baby-Boom Collectibles

The Silver Age of comics began with *Showcase* and Gardner Fox and Julius Schwartz were two of its principal architects. In the 1950s, DC had decided to start introducing new heroic characters to their line in the wake of the horror comics implosion which the industry had experienced in 1955-56. While DC's books hadn't really been effected by the anti-horror comics backlash, the collapse of that genre in the wake of the introduction of the Comics Code Authority had cleared the racks for new titles, and it was logically assumed that with the horror and crime comics largely wiped out there was room for more super hero comics again.

The comic book industry has experienced sale cycles from the very beginning. Superheroes dominated until after the end of World War Two, whereupon the crime and horror genre began to grow until by 1952 they dominated the comic book output.

While it could be argued that the crime and horror comics crash was artificially induced, it happened nonetheless. While Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman had weathered that stormy period, the rest of the DC line consisted of various "inoffensive" adventure and science fiction titles. These books, such as *Strange Adventures*, were edited by Julius Schwartz, and one of the principle writers was a former lawyer turned author named Gardner Fox.

Gardner Francis Fox

Gardner Francis Fox (1911-1987) began writing comics in 1937 and soon thereafter created the Flash and Hawkman for DC. By the time he quit working for the company in 1969 he'd written 4,200 stories. During the Forties he helped create the Justice Society of America and such key figures of the period as Dr. Fate. Fox clearly read the science fiction being published at the time, from Edgar Rice Burroughs and Robert E. Howard to H.P. Lovecraft, so he was interested and attuned to the concept of telling an interesting tale. In the 1940s he even wrote prose fiction for the pulp magazines *Weird Tales* ("The Weirds of the Woodcarver" in 1944) and the pulp magazine *Planet Stories*. In the pulps he wrote under his own name and under the pseudonyms Jeffrey Gardner, Jefferson Cooper, and James Kendricks. He began writing novels in the 1950s, beginning with the historical romance *The Borgia Blade* in 1953.

Gardner increased his output of novels in the 1960s and '70s, particularly after he left DC in 1969. Although in a published interview Fox claims that he resigned, he makes it clear that he felt forced to after he and other writers attempted to lobby DC for a benefits package (back then writers and artists didn't have a contract per se). They were essentially just freelancers, but it was made clear that if they worked for DC, then they couldn't work for the competition. Since this essentially made them company employees, some began to ask for the kinds of

The Th
Man's
The legendary team of Gardner Fox, Julie Schwartz, Carmine Infantino, and Murphy Anderson just may have created the greatest sci-fi hero of the Silver Age!
MYSTERY IN SPACE & ADAM STRANGE © 1958 DC

medical and pension benefits employees should expect. DC, in the person of Jack Leibowitz, disliked this, even though Gardner Fox had worked for the company for more than 30 years (both DC and Marvel had the same policy regarding freelancers). This was also one of the reported reasons that Jack Kirby left Marvel for DC in 1970, although he soon found that what was promised him wasn't quite as generous as what was delivered.

Although Fox wrote for Marvel in the early '70s, his writing output from 1969-76 largely consisted of barbarian novels in the Kothar and Kyrik series. That DC still felt touchy about the subject of Fox was evident when they did their early '70s fanzine *The Amazing World Of DC Comics*. While people like Carmine Infantino and Julius Schwartz were spotlighted and interviewed, Fox was only mentioned in passing, although he was quoted in a feature about Julius Schwartz in 1974. That Fox had possibly contributed even more to DC by that time than either Schwartz or Infantino had, was never mentioned.

The most bizarre chapter in Fox's career occurred in 1979 when it was discovered that a writer named James Harvey had plagiarized Fox's 1964 novel *Escape Across The Cosmos* by retyping the book into manuscript form, changing the names of the characters and selling it as his own original work--twice! It was published as *Titans Of The Universe* by James Harvey (Manor, 1978) and *Star Chase* by Brian James Royal (Elsevier-Nelson, 1979). When exposed, it was revealed that Harvey, "a quiet man in his forties or fifties" was also marketing other manuscripts, which remained unidentified.

Fox was clearly a writer in the 1950s and '60s whose work in science fiction was admired in the escapist adventure genre. As one of the regular stable of writers used by editor Julius Schwartz by the time Adam Strange was created, Fox had already contributed to the revival of The Flash in *Showcase* #4, 8, 13 & 14. While *Showcase* #s 15 & 16 had introduced a typical space opera hero (and some say Buck Rogers clone) named Space Ranger, Julius Schwartz had come up with the idea for a contemporary adventure hero named Adam Strange, an Earth man transported to an alien world where he links up with a beautiful woman and her scientist father. This premise was clearly similar to Flash Gordon, an Earth man who, in the company of a beautiful Earth woman named Dale and an Earth scientist named Dr. Zarkov, journey to an alien world.

The situation was a stock one, but Fox helped transform it into something more than just an updated Flash Gordon. Without the benefit of a rocketship, Adam Strange (a name supposedly derived from being the first Earth man, Adam, on a Strange new planet) was zipped across the cosmos to another world. While the obvious parallels have been drawn between Adam Strange and Edgar Rice Burroughs' 1911 story *A Princess Of Mars* (which introduced John Carter of Mars), there may be a second, more direct influence.

While John Carter was transported to Mars instantaneously, no scientific explanation was ever provided and the method remains bizarre and more than just a little metaphysical even more than 80 years later.

inking Hero

By James Van Hise

The fact that John Carter's physical body remained on Earth while he had a new physical body identical to his Earth form when he appeared on Mars made any sort of scientific explanation difficult to construct. And when he returned to Earth he resumed his earthly form, which had remained in a of state of suspended animation during his initial 10 year absence, while the physical body he'd used on Mars vanished from that world along with him. It's difficult to find any two ERB fans who can agree on an explanation for this phenomenon. It remains both highly imaginative and quite inexplicable.

Regarding this concept, Fox stated in a 1983 interview, "I suppose you could probably say John Carter was in my subconscious. You had to think of some interesting way to transfer him from Earth to the planet Rann before you even got started in on a plot, but it was fun to do." John Carter

PREVIOUS PAGE: *Showcase* #17 (Nov/Dec 1958) the first appearance of Adam Strange. ABOVE: *MIS* #59 (May 1960). BELOW: *MIS* #55 (Nov 1959), with its famous "grey-tone" cover.

may well have been at the core of Adam Strange, but a John Carter imitator may well have provided the germ of inspiration as well.

While the word teleportation, or even a standard description of such a concept, never appeared in any of ERB's books, it was used in an old story which was clearly a John Carter of Mars imitation. "Kaldar, World Of Antares" by Edmond Hamilton appeared in the April, 1933 issue of the fantasy pulp *Magic Carpet* magazine (a short-lived companion to *Weird Tales*). The story involved a man who is sent via a force projector to a planet orbiting the star sun Antares, and the description of the force projector sounds exactly like teleportation.

At the end of the story, the man happens to be standing in the exact spot he first appeared on Kaldar when a second beam sent from Earth strikes him and snatches him back, much against his will. Both the method of transport, and the manner in which the man is returned to Earth at the conclusion of the story, is very similar to what Gardner Fox conceived for Adam Strange.

While "Kaldar, World Of Antares" is an obscure story today, Fox could have easily read it in the 1930s. Plus Edmond Hamilton was a very popular writer in that period, and he even wrote some scripts for DC in the '40s and '50s, so he and Fox may well have known each other through that common link.

The Showcase "Tryouts"

As most collectors and fans look back, they quickly see that it was the strength of imagination Gardner Fox brought to bear on *Showcase* #17-19 that made them a success. In contrast to the writing, the art (by Mike Sekowsky and Bernard Sachs) tended to make the most fantastic concepts look rather drab and prosaic. While art by Sekowsky and Sachs brought an undeniable charm to the super heroics of The Justice League Of America, their talents, when applied to DC science fiction, was something that many fans had difficulty fully appreciating.

Showcase #17 (November/December 1958) features a Gil Kane cover of Adam firing a ray gun at a little flying saucer which is wielding a gigantic metal pendulum against a domed city. It's a typical cover such as one would find on *Strange Adventures* or *Mystery In Space* during that period. The lead story opens with archeologist Adam Strange discovering a secret Incan treasure trove, and then having to escape the angry natives by attempting to leap a 25 foot wide chasm. In an exercise in coincidence, which would do Edgar Rice Burroughs proud, Adam leaps into the chasm just as it is struck by a teleportation beam sent from the planet Rann.

Rann orbits the star sun Alpha Centauri 25 trillion miles away. The zeta beam was meant to be some sort of communications beam which had been altered by its journey through space. In this 15 page story, Adam Strange learns the language (through a device called a Menticizer), and helps the people of Rann fend off an attack by aliens who call themselves The Eternals and whose spacecraft look remarkably like u-boats. In another nod to Burroughs, the craft the people of Rann use are called fliers, and like the Mars of ERB, this world has no space ships. They acquire one from a super scientific civilization which appears on Rann every 25 years to see if the world has outlawed war yet. This time the city appears just in time to participate in the defeat of the Eternals. The aliens are defeated and then Adam is drawn back to Earth. But even though he didn't know the teleportation beam would wear off, he manages to learn from Sardath (the scientist father of Alanna, the beautiful woman he meets upon his arrival) exactly where the next beam will strike Earth so that he can catch a convenient ride back to Rann.

In the second story in the issue, "The Planet And the Pendulum!" Adam gets a uniform… a red spacesuit whose design would be altered slightly when he moves to *Mystery In Space*.

Showcase #18 (January/February 1959) shows the premise still being fine tuned. In a rather average story with more Sekowsky/Sachs art, the people of Rann are stranded on a sub-atomic world and only Adam Strange is bright enough to figure out how to return to normal size and defeat the aliens. In the second story Adam arrives on Rann to discover that life-size Adam Strange dolls are "all the rage." This leads to a secret mission to discover what a scientist is plotting. All pretty standard fare.

Showcase #19 (March/April, 1959) spotlights the name Adam Strange at the top of the cover for the first time, while the previous two issues have the heading "Adventures On Other Worlds." The lead story, "Challenge Of The Star Hunter" includes a gimmick which would become a staple in the Adam Strange adventures to follow–he uses his wits to out-think his opponent rather than building a super scientific device. In this case he's captured by a shape-changing alien who defies Adam and Alanna to guess what form he'll adopt. When each finds a likely suspect, Adam

tricks one of the creatures into reacting to something he says, thereby giving it away. It would be things like this which would cause Adam Strange to come to be called "the thinking man's super hero."

Another idea introduced in these *Showcase* stories is for Adam to travel to some remote part of the Earth whenever he must rendezvous with the zeta beam. On each occasion, he finds a unique experience awaiting him at the location, including saving a man from an elephant stampede in "Mystery of the Metal Menace." In that story the menace on Rann is a typical alien which captures Adam and Alanna. He distracts it while she rigs the alien's control panel behind its back.

A close examination of the art in *Showcase* #19 indicates that it's not drawn by Mike Sekowsky this time, but by Carmine Infantino. Even though Bernard Sachs' "heavy handed" inking does a good job to disguise Infantino, there are certain underlying subtleties of character stance and facial quality that give away the identity of the penciler. Infantino's pencils were apparently fairly "loose" in some of his work, which gave the inkers more latitude. In contrast to Bernard Sachs' inking "overpowering" Infantino's pencils, Murphy Anderson's inking over Infantino would later create one of the most beautiful "ink/pencil blends" of the Silver Age.

In His "Own" Magazine

After the three *Showcase* "tryout" issues, Adam Strange was granted his own title (so to speak) when he made the lead given the covers of *Mystery In Space* beginning with #53 (August 1959). "Menace of the Robot Raiders!" gets the new series off to an inauspicious start as the 10 page story offers little room for plot development and the villain behind the robot threat is obvious all along. Infantino is the penciler, but the inking is by Joe Giella who, like Sachs, also overpowered Infantino's graceful renditions of the human form. Giella did better work on later Infantino Adam Strange pencils, as well as on other series like The Flash.

It is unfortunate that even though Adam Strange was the lead feature in *Mystery In Space* at this point, his adventures were rather short, allowing little room to develop more than just the most perfunctory of plots… but this would gradually change.

"Invaders of the Underground World!" (called "The Invaders from the Underground World!" on the cover of *Mystery In Space* #54) is a step up even though it's a page shorter. The art by Infantino, although still inked by Giella, is tighter and seems striving to overcome the restrictions imposed on the art by the inking. In this story Adam arrives on Rann only to be arrested for committing a locked room theft. It's soon revealed that a race of underground men are preparing to invade the surface, and when they conveniently kidnap Adam Strange and then release him, he has the information he needs to defeat them. Fortunately all of the chemical substances which Adam is familiar with on Earth also exist on Rann, or else they'd all be out of luck.

Issue #55 (November 1959) is "The Beast From The Runaway World" and has a rather solemn beginning in which Adam goes to meet the zeta beam on Earth only to be disappointed when nothing happens. He fears that perhaps he'll never see Rann and Alanna again, but he goes from sadness to determination when he convinces himself that the next scheduled strike of the beam must occur, and it does. Adam discovers that the previous beam was intercepted by a runaway planet and a dinosaur-like creature was beamed to Rann instead, although for some reason it's brit there when he arrives and it hasn't faded away yet. It's an interesting little story, although the highlight of the issue is the incredible and highly collectible wash cover by Gil Kane (who tried this technique on occasion, such as the cover of *Green Lantern* #8).

10¢
MYSTERY IN SPACE
THE ROBOTS ARE REVOLTING AGAINST MY BEAM CONTROL! GOT TO RAY-BLAST THEM BEFORE THEY RUN RIOT OVER THIS WORLD!
A THRILL-PACKED ADAM STRANGE ADVENTURE...
"MENACE OF THE ROBOT RAIDERS!"

ABOVE: Adam Strange becomes the Silver superstar of *MIS* with #53 (Aug 1959). BELOW: The sequel to *JLA* #3, *MIS* #75 (May 1962) featured the Justice League.

Back then DC had the curious practice of coming up with a cover for an issue first, and then having a story written around it. Thus in many of these early comics there is invariably a panel in the story which is a recreation of the cover by the interior story artist.

A turning point occurred in the series with issue #56 (December 1959) as it featured the first team-up on the strip of Carmine Infantino (the regular penciler) with Murphy Anderson (who would return to the strip periodically and contribute classic work each time until he became the primary inker, whereupon he got even better). "The Menace Of The Super-Atom!" clearly has a different look as Anderson's inking enhances Infantino's detail work rather than flattening them out. The flier which meets Adam when he appears on Rann is also clearly of the kind of imaginative design work Infantino excelled in (rather than the "old fashioned" looking hardware of Mike Sekowsky's *Showcase* work).

While the story in #56 is not markedly better than what came before, the art by *(Continued on page 66)*

SPACE ACT ON ILLUSTRATION: ALI MAHMOUD

Foolish Earth Creatures!

by Keeros the Space Giant
(as told to Steve Sibra the Earthling)

Greetings, frail Earthlings! My name is Keeros, and I am Master Warlord, Battle Leader of the once-proud planet Graekus. Sadly, I am now stranded on your miserable planet Earth, cursed with a near-endless life among your puny, dwarf-like species. For I am a space giant who has traveled back in time to tell you my story, and warn of your planet's impending doom.

In the year 2170 (by your Earth calendar) my planet was torn from its own universe and flung into an alien orbit between Mars and your beloved Earth. I attempted to lead my fellow Graeki in the overthrow of your world, for we Graekian space giants are a race of warriors, interested only in conquest. We sought to capture the Earth's supply of Vortex, the element which gives us the power of invisibility!

We would have succeeded in capturing your miserable planet, but for the efforts of Captain Darnay and his headstrong daughter Zoa (stubborn as a Venusian leech, that woman was!), and the accursed brilliance of Doctor Carvel, the Earth scientist. After they subdued me and my landing party, they helped bring about the demolition of Graeki society, and the very expulsion of my valiant homeworld from its new orbit. Now I am trapped here on Earth, having vowed to abandon my evil, warlike ways.

But I am here today to tell you, I have lied--lied,--do you hear? You foolish Earth creatures are so trusting, so naive, it is pitiful! How can a warlord, born to conquer, become a peacemonger, a rebuilder of your broken cities? It is my destiny to destroy, not rebuild; do you understand me?

For years I bided my time, secretly accumulating a huge supply of precious Vortex, our element of invisibility that is so abundant on our world. Then, when I deemed my supply of Vortex to be large enough, I simply... disappeared. Using the Graeki powers of invisibility, I have walked proud and undetected among your feeble fellow man.

As I set about plotting my revenge over lo, these many years, I traveled to all the four corners of your pathetic world. One day, in the ruins of a once-great city that had been located in the heart of a country called the United States of

America, I made an amazing and upsetting discovery; one that has led to my journey here to tell my story and give my warning. What I discovered was a group of what you call "comic magazines," made with pulp wood and filled with brightly covered pictures. As I disdainfully scanned these relics, I received the greatest of shocks–for there, among the tattered covers and crumbling pages, I found the story of my own plight, the casting of Graekus into your solar system, my shameful capture at the hands of the treacherous Earthlings, the ruination of my culture–it was all there, in the pages of a comic magazine entitled *Space Action*, published over two hundred years before it came to pass!

I was stunned by this discovery. Apparently somehow, in the year 1952, the artists and writers of a company called Ace Periodicals, located on West 47th Street in the Earth City of New York, had found a way to tap into the future history of their planet! Not only was my own story told, with uncanny accuracy, but also other stories of the outer space adventures of Earthmen, occurring both before and after my own encounter. There were three issues of this prophetic magazine published before the flow of the future sight was, for some reason, brought to an abrupt halt.

These three magazines are filled with the spacebound adventures of the human race. There are tales of human treachery, as in "Double Menace on Jupiter's Moon," where discovery of the new metal Asteroidium leads to conflict between the honorable and the deceitful elements of humanity. There are stories of terrible encounters with monstrous creatures from the far reaches of space, as in "Prisoners of the Incredible Plants." There are even stories of mankind's manipulation of alien creatures for greedy human ends, such as the tale "Beware the Human Meteorites." Somehow, a few pathetic humans in the mid-twentieth century were able to unlock the secrets of the future, if only for a brief time.

I do not know what became of these human prophets. Perhaps the burden of their inexplicable gift drove them to madness or death. Perhaps they were destroyed by the ominous Comics Code Authority, a powerful force which lurked about during that time period and often struck without warning—or so I am led to believe by writings in other comic magazines from this era which I have read. Whatever the reason, their voices were silenced, almost as quickly as they appeared.

But no matter; for I am grateful to them, you see. For they have helped me. Not only could I read about mankind's outer space adventures before my time, but also I now can know what will happen in the future, for many of these stories took place after my own. And the Earthlings do not know that I am nearly immortal, and will live on for many hundreds of years. Already those who foiled my attack on Earth are dead and turned to dust. In fact, I was able to travel here, to the final years of the twentieth century, by means of a time travel device which I located here in the future, thanks to a story in the third and final issue of *Space Action Comics*. I have come here, and captured the weak-willed human called Steve Sibra, in order to force him to tell you my story and to give to you this warning: I am not finished with you cretinous humans! I have a score to settle.

And thanks to *Space Action Comics*, I will be able to seek out other enemies of Earth, both human and non-human, as they appear with the passage of time. I will band together with the likes of Zorka, Dictator of Japetus, and the Silicon Monsters from Galaxy X! Together we will change the course of Earth's future history. Together we will succeed where, individually, we were to fail! The day will come when I, Warlord Keeros of the planet Graekus, shall rule this wretched ball of mud which you call Mother Earth!

Your only chance for survival is to obtain copies of these three comics magazines, *Space Action Comics*, from 1952. Read, and learn from them, as I have! Pass this knowledge forward, from generation to generation. Perhaps you will be able to devise a plan to defeat me. Or perhaps not. Only time will tell. In the meantime, remember: your pitiful planet has only one chance for survival. That chance lies in the pages of *Space Action Comics*.

All Hail Warlord Keeros! ■

UNUSUAL INTERPLANETARY ADVENTURES
SPACE
OCT.
10¢
ACTION
EARTH BASE TO SCOUT XP39 / STOP KIDDING US / WE KNOW YOU'RE NOT BEING ATTACKED BY SCIENTISTS SAY THERE'S NO LIFE ON ISHTAR /

The short-lived, three-issue run of *Space Action* is a favorite of '50s sci-fi collectors.

FACING PAGE: A cover close-up of *Space Action* #2 (Aug 1952).

ABOVE: *Space Action* #1 (Jun 1952).

LEFT: *Space Action* #3 (Oct 1952).

DUCKS IN SPACE!

Rendering Rockets from Buck to Duck

BY MICHAEL NAIMAN

Most duck collectors think of Uncle Scrooge, Donald, and the nephews exploring the sea, searching for lost cities, or hunting for hidden treasures using horses, ships, and camels as their primary mode of transportation. But when Sputnik changed the way that we perceived our world, Carl Barks surmised that comic-reading kids might want to read about their favorite denizens of Duckburg in their own adventures to the moon, the planets, and even the stars! So Carl began to draw spaceships… not standard Apollo-style, sensible spaceships mind you,

...ose were still years away!) ...ere inventing a new ...e machines of the imagination ...ecent wing aircraft designed ...ver the limitless void within ...ecently, ...ainto sensibilities or engineering ...ese ...ominous craft were the real ...ork horsesyers to the cosmos!

...ance history with rockets ...ck in 1944 when ...n Barks incorporated rockets into one of his stories. But it wasn't until the Age of Spunnik in the 1950s that he really came up with his wildest, most galactic get-arounds ...before taking a look at some of the better examples of science that made rocket ships in his stories at that might have been the inspiration for many of real-world planetary inventions!

It is generally known that Carl loved reading the sagas of Zane Grey and watching the cinematic movies featuring the likes of "hoots, toots & shootin'" Hoot Gibson and the assorted buckaroos of the badlands. While growing up in rural Oregon in the early part of the century, western movies and dime novels were the most common forms of escape available to young readers. Westerns provided a popular link to the romantic not-so-distant past of an idealized 19th century America.

Then the Great War (WWI) with its incredible technological advances in weapons and transportation fired the imaginations of illustrators and writers the world over. Now, suddenly, nothing was too fantastic to imagine ... suddenly flying bombers, unstoppable tanks, and rapid-fire machine guns were part of the popular culture.

...ecember/January 1928-1929 the world was introduced to the comic strip adventures of Buck Rogers (thanks ...e influence of the President of the National Newspaper ...yndicate of America, Joseph Medill Patterson). Phil Nowlan ...d artist Dick Calkins popularized the awesome power of rocket pistols, gravity-defying ...and, for the first time) ...pened the American moviegoer to one of the most fantastic rocket ships ever seen! It is no surprise that design-master Barks was duly impressed when reading these fantastic stories of the future in the early comic strips!

According to Barks, "I couldn't help but notice the peculiar shapes and sizes of some of the spacecraft he designed. Calkins had created these ships a ...e before there was anything like television, regular passenger ...ains or for that matter decent roadways. The ...ld was ... anything and everything was possible. I ... some of Calkins' freewheeling design ... my own madcap machines."

Although Barks readers were ... the "mad-cap" rocket designs in ... *Comics & Stories* (#44, June 1944) and ... wasn't until 1957-59 that we see Barks ... fantastic flying machines into some ...

Barks' 1950's spacecraft were a reflection of the 1950s rockets seen in the movies of the era. What's fun is to see ... structures from the films "Destination Moon" (1950), "Rocketship X-M" (1950), "When Worlds Collide" (1951), and "Man From Planet X" (1952)... and the TV shows "Tom Corbett Space Cadet" (1950) and "Space Patrol" (1951). Americans were literally obsessed with the idea of riding the high frontier. Futuristic dreams and push-button convenience were everywhere in the mass media... even the Disneyland television program was celebrating the dawning of the Space Age with Tomorrowland.

One of the best examples of way-out-rocketry (and sheer fun and enjoyment) is "The Twenty-Four Carat Moon" (*Uncle Scrooge* #24, December 1958/February 1959). In a mad (mad mad mad mad) off-world romp, the Beagle Boys, the Rajah of Dimoor, and an archtypical Texas cattleman (with no name)... all stampede into space to capture a newly discovered golden moon (with Donald at the controls, paid his usual 30¢-an hour). After arriving, the Earthly ambassadors

MIKE'S FAVORITE BARKS ROCKET STORIES

WD's Comics & Stories #44
(May 1944) "The Mad Chemist"

WD's Comics & Stories #93
(Jun 1948) "Rocket Race to the Moon"

Mickey Mouse Almanac #1
(Dec 1957) "August Accident"

WD's Comics & Stories #212
(May 1958) "Around The World In 80 Minutes"

Disneyland Birthday Party #1
(Oct 1958) "Forbidium And Money Bin"

Uncle Scrooge #24
(Dec 1958) "The Twenty-Four Carat Moon"

WD's Comics & Stories #220
(Jan 1959) "Weemite

Four Color #1025
(Vacation In Disneyland, Aug 1959) "Dream Planet"

Uncle Scrooge #29
(Mar 1960) "Island In The Sky"

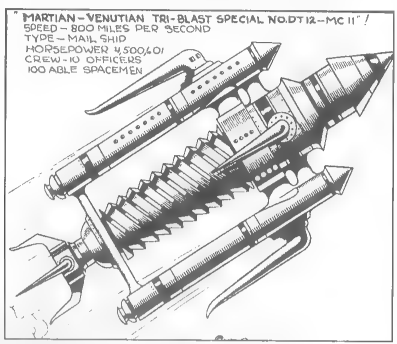
Uncle Scrooge #37
(Mar 1962) "The Great Pop Up" (Gyro Gearloose backup story)

Uncle Scrooge #49
(May 1964) "The Loony Lunar Gold Rush"

Uncle Scrooge #53
(Oct 1964) "Interplanetary Postman"

encounter extraterrestrial life forms. Scrooge ultimately negotiates a "special deal" with the aliens. Who gets the best of the deal? Who do you think? An inexpensive reader copy or reprint of this little nugget is a keeper!

Another rad-rocket-ride ensues in *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* #212 (May 1958) and features an intercontinental rocket race with Donald and the nephews piloting a sleek needle-nose rocket. The rules of the race require the contestants to circumnavigate the globe in 80 minutes… while gathering a souvenir from each continent along the way. A good chuckle (especially for computer enthusiasts) is waiting at the end of the story. Gyro and Professor Sliderule consult the *modern* "…2,000,000 tube electronic computer" for guidance (remember this is 1958). The story in #212 retells "Rocket Race to the Moon" which was featured in *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* #93 (June 1948) both use a story premise and rocket designs that are very similar.

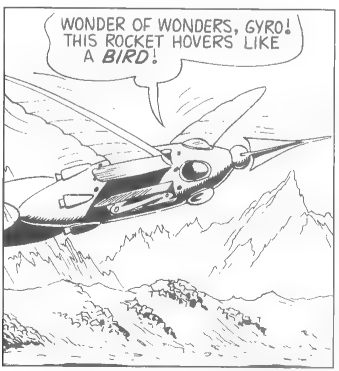


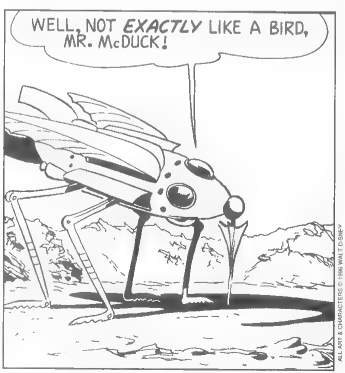
ABOVE: An example of Buck Rogers' 21st century spacecraft as drawn by Dick Calkins. These flamboyant and even whimsical designs inspired Carl Barks. Barks' anthropomorphic needle-nosed spaceship from *Disneyland Birthday Party* #1 (October 1958) attempts to extract valuable ore from the surface of the moon.

As readers of the Disney series began to mature in the early '60s, and the threat of atomic war via ICBM (Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile) became a reality, their taste for space changed. The "relevancy" of the upcoming Marvel Age, the sarcastic attitudes of *MAD Magazine*, and the Mercury space program, all had a chilling effect on ducks in space.

While Carl Barks' space-age stories of the '60's were still entertaining, the "space-age genre" was no longer the novelty it had once been. But, from a purely design standpoint, the rocketships of Carl Barks, while paying homage to Buck Rogers, provided the young minds of the '50's with a vehicle that would take them on a wild and wonderful ride. The fantastic rococo elements of angular fins, swollen chambers, enormous rivets, and oversized view-ports, in Barks' space-ships and their wonderful "duck-stronauts" still spark that sense of wonder that can truly reach the stars! ■

Special thanks to the Carl Barks Studio, Ole R. Nielsen, David Gerstein, everyone on the Disney Digest Internet, and duck collectors all over the world.





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#12 App G/VG,removed from bound vol (3 binder holes, slightly trimmed) Classic cvr features woman bound & being cemented into statue! $100.00
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Vol 3, #9 F/F+ ....
..... $150.00

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#11 G $65.00
#11 Fr/Fr- ..$55.00

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#7 Fr (tape, repair) Classic cvr .$625.00
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TARGET
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Vol 9, #4 Fr, L B Cole cvr features Golden Eagle rescuing civilians from Gorilla $23.00
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TERRIFIC COMICS
#2 Fr removed from bound vol 3 tiny binder holes, trimmed, green tape B C Shomburg cvr !! $225.00

THRILLING
#71 Fr $35.00

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#1 Pr (pgs split, nice cvr !), miss last pg $160.00
#6 Pr/Fr $66.00
#14 App VF slight prof rest Attractive copy! Classic cvr features woman bound to tree to be set on fire $260.00
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#5 Pr/Fr, color-touched, binder holes $65.00
#16 Fr $38.00

ZAGO
#3 Fr/G $33.00

ZIP
#1 Pr $185.00
#14 Pr, bondage cvr $150.00
#16 Pr/Fr, bondage cvr ! $55.00
#24 Pr/Fr $40.00

ZOOT
#9 Pr (large mouse chew) $25.00
#11 App G/VG 2 sma unnecessary pieces tape & slight glue residue at spine Bondage cvr !! $125.00
#14(3/48) Fr $40.00

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Ultra Violet Light can... DESTROY YOUR COMICS

Most collectors are destroying their comics, some slower than others, with improper storage and display. And one of the biggest villains in this destruction scenario is UV light!. UV stands for Ultra-Violet radiation. This is probably the least understood and most misused terminology in all of fandom. Unless you guard against UV, you might as well take your *Spider-Man* #1, Detective #27, or even your *Blackhawk* #73 (my first comic book) and staple it to your doormat!

I recently had the occasion to test most all the leading comic storage products that claim to be UV barriers. I'm sorry to report that none passed. This is regrettable, because the degrading of color and ink reflectivity on comic books can be likened to descending a one-way staircase. Every time you expose a comic to light, you take one step down. The more light, the faster you descend. In your closet or cabinet with no light, these variables "stand still," but wherever UV light enters the picture, down you go, more and more steps... and you can never take a step back up.

Even more insidious is that most never notice the fading. The difference can only be detected when compared to a comic left in the dark. By the time the fading is noticed, only a few steps remain until the comic colors are gone.

To test this, I recently irradiated two recent comics with both fluorescent light and direct sunlight for several weeks. One was protected by a true UV Barrier and one was "protected" by a pretender. The difference between the two at the conclusion of the test was startling!

I believe we are all caretakers of irreplaceable and historic items. That's why at every Comic Con I attend, I actually get physically ill when I see "Mile High" and other high grade comics displayed in the strong glaring fluorescent light of the dealer's rooms. Because the "Mile Highs" were stored for 40 years in the dark, their colors still rank at "Denver" (forgive the play on words). Displaying comics without proper UV barriers is like rushing them down those terrible stairs to oblivion.

A little known fact for most collectors is that ultra violet light is the greatest enemy of comic book conservation and preservation.

BY ERNIE GERBER

Understanding UV

The light we see and don't see is part of the electro-magnetic spectrum It is delineated by certain wave lengths. The longer wave lengths of 800 to 3,000 nanometers and above are called infra-red. These longer electro-magnetic waves do not damage the pigment of comics. As the wave lengths shorten, red at 700 nanometers, green at 500, and violet at 400, the damage to paper and pigment intensifies. Below 390 nanometers, you can no longer see the light; it enters the "twilight zone" of ultra-violet.

It's here the damage increases exponentially. Once we hit 300 nanometers, most common glass and plastic prevents further transmission of the UV. However, UV continues even below 300 nanometers, but that hardly concerns us since the UV between 200 and 300 nanometers generally will not get to our comics anyway (unless you have them outside in full sun without any protection).

So where is the real problem? The damaging short-wave radiation occurs between 300 and 390 nanometers, because common plastics and glass will not stop it and it eventually destroys color and paper.

The light that comes from fluorescent fixtures is filled with UV radiation from 300 to 390 nanometers. Funny thing is that the glass that surrounds the glowing gas won't allow UV less than 300 nanometers to escape. The glass windows in your home also kill "sub-300" invaders.

And now here's the rub. If a manufacturer of a comic bag advertises that their product is, in fact, a "UV barrier" and it, in fact, blocks UV shorter than, say 280 nanometers, is that the complete truth?

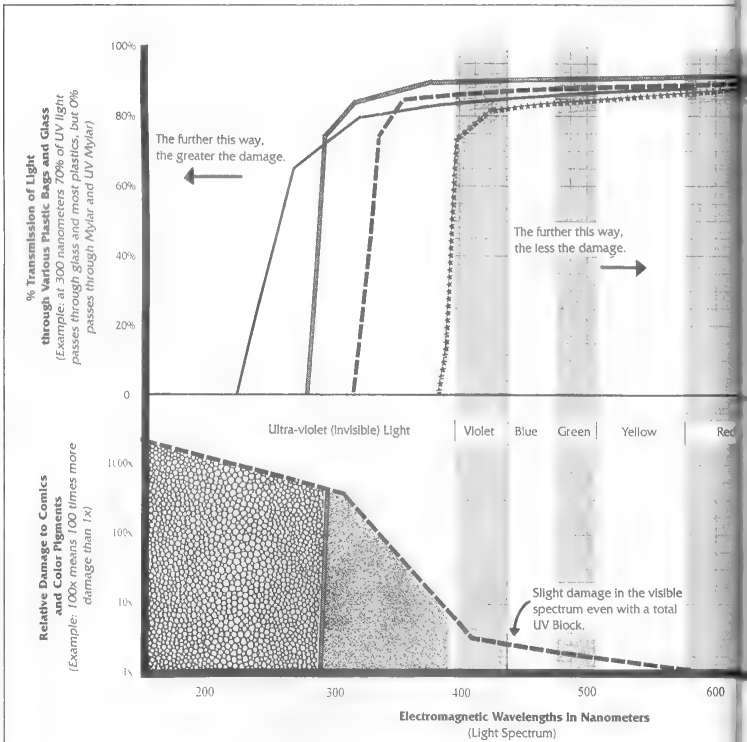
Now you see why I get upset. Legally, the portended bag does block "some" UV light waves, but these are the same light waves that are blocked by most plastic or glass. The light waves that every hobbyist should be concerned with are those above 300 nanometers! These are not blocked by ordinary plastic or glass and therefore are the ones that could literally DESTROY YOUR COMICS!

I cannot over emphasize the importance of keeping comics UV protected. The older comics are particularly sensitive to fading (many of the more recent inks are more resistant).

From extensive testing, I have found that DC comics from the 1970s and earlier have a fairly weak defense against UV. Current Marvel Comics are somewhat more resistant. All inks react differently to UV.

The First To Fade

Generally the red and yellow colors are the first to fade. This



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is because those colors reflect red and yellow but absorb blue and violets, thus causing more destruction. The blue colors last longer because they reflect the more damaging wave lengths.

There are tens of thousands of collectors buying the "pretty" bags and plastic vaults in the belief that their comics won't fade. Our hobby should collectively be quite upset about this.

As for me personally, I will gladly sell whatever a customer requests (Mylar D, polypropylene, polyethylene, polystyrene-OPI, or acrylic). At the same time, the customer has right to all the facts about each product, especially what it is and what it can (and cannot) do relative to UV.

The truth is that no one can see fading from one day to the next, or even from one year to the next. But it is cumulative and eventually shows. Ironically, everyone agrees that the "Mile High" collection, with its vibrant colors and white pages, was somehow immune to the aging process. The trouble is that we had to wait 40 years to see the difference!

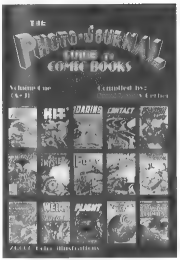
Will your books show UV deterioration in a year? Five years? Perhaps not noticeably. But you will absolutely see the difference in, say 20 years…, together with a disastrous decrease in value!

It is a little like smoking cigarettes (I quit in 1979). One does not see much of a decline in health for the first 20 years, but when it does become apparent, it's usually too late. All of us, and our comics too, will meet the grim reaper… but why not postpone the event as long as possible?

There has never been a true Ultra-violet barrier comic bag or sleeve that is also acceptably inert and totally stable. I have privately spent years studying and researching this problem and its potential solution. Come July 1st, 1996, both in print and in person (at the San Diego Convention), I'm happy to announce in the pages of *CBM* that I will present a solution to the UV problem.

As for an ongoing column addressing conservation and preservation questions… I'm game if you are. I feel strongly that research should be based on facts, not fantasies… and hobbyists deserve to get information that is complete and that provides the whole picture. You can count on that from me.

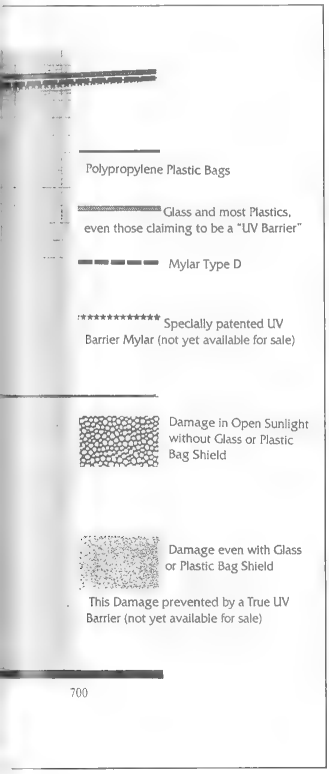
If you'd care to write, send your conservation and preservation questions and/or your comments to *CBM*. See you in future issues and happy collecting. ■



ABOVE: **Vol. I of Gerber's landmark *Photo-Journal Guide To Comic Books*.**

The upper portion of the chart shows "what plastics do and don't do" regarding their ability to be effective UV barriers.

The lower portion of the chart shows the relative damage to color pigments by each portion of the light spectrum (note: the vast majority of damage is caused by light in the UV ranges).


Polypropylene Plastic Bags
Glass and most Plastics, even those claiming to be a "UV Barrier"
Mylar Type D
Specially patented UV Barrier Mylar (not yet available for sale)
Damage in Open Sunlight without Glass or Plastic Bag Shield
Damage even with Glass or Plastic Bag Shield
This Damage prevented by a True UV Barrier (not yet available for sale)
700

Ernie Gerber read and collected comics as a child, especially his favorites, Blackhawk *and* Uncle Scrooge. *In 1978, Ernie developed and eventually patented the first sealing process and equipment for making Mylar R bags and is a noted Professional Engineer. He is best known in fandom as the author of* The Photo-Journal Guide to Comics *and* The Photo-Journal Guide to Marvel Comics *published from 1984-1991.*

Ernie is now working on research and development in the field of Conservation and Preservation of Comics and Collectibles. He has also started production of The Photo-Journal Guide to DC Comics *(volumes 5-7) in association with Gemstone Publishing.*

-th ts im- -s b -le!

Those Wonderful Sci-Fi DC "Teaser" Covers...

by ofgedu

Anyone who buys comic books realizes the importance of a good cover. Today's covers fight for your attention with added production features such as holograms, foil enhanced artwork, etc. But in the early days, the cover's subject matter and rendering alone were used to spark interest and compel purchase. When I remember scanning the comic racks during the Silver Age, no covers seemed to entice as irresistibly as those produced by DC for their SF anthology books. They depicted mysteries that just had to be solved! Who could resist finding out why the "Faceless Creature" was faceless in *Strange Adventures* #124 and #153? Who could resist finding the explanation for such as the "Interplanetary Tug-Of-War", using the Earth as a focal point cover featured on *Mystery In Space* #47. DC was the champion producer of these teaser covers during the Silver Age!

(An aside to the "Faceless Creature" stories - I wonder if these covers and stories are more marred, condition wise, than other books of this period? I remember filling in the features on my original copy, especially the interior panorama, where the reason for the lack of features is explained. It was irresistible to fill in the missing eyes, nose and mouth!)

Three covers that especially attracted me are *Mystery In Space* #44 (July, 1958), *Strange Adventures* #150 (March, 1963) and the cover to a story reprinted in *Super DC Giant* #2" (Summer, 1976).

The first story is "Secret of the Flying Buzz Saw". I only have the reprint in *Super DC Giant* #27 to go by, but I distinctly remember being intrigued by the original cover, when it first came out. It pictures a flying saucer, with a saw blade edge, cutting city skyscrapers down like giant redwoods. A fantastic image! Imagine destruction on such a massive scale! What would it be like to watch from below, or from above in an aircraft? What could Earth's defenses do about this? Imagine the noise! To a kid, who is just becoming fascinated by the noise and ability of Dad's power tools, this was the ultimate. (This show of power would surely get an ape grunt out of Tim Allen!)

The shock value and unusual nature of this type of cover seems to indicate that the editors had the cover worked up first, then sentenced some poor writer to the task of producing a logical story around this concept.

In this example the cover is justified nicely. Gardner Fox tells a good story (which included a quick half page physics lesson the gravitational pull of a white dwarf star, ending with the observation that a 150 pound man would weigh 250,000 tons on a dwarf star, and be smashed flatter than a piece of paper – cool!), and Russ Heath contributes great art, with classic flying saucers and neat aliens (although I think he owes a debt to Wally Wood for the space helmets depicted on the first panel on page six, and the fourth panel

on the last page. Those helmets look mighty familiar!)

The second example is from *Mystery In Space* #44, and it is a classic! The continent of North America is plucked from the Earth and towed through space by an alien spacecraft. This highly detailed image asks many fascinating questions – Who could do this? Why such an "impossible" feat? Do the people die? Is it the end of the world? How big are the cables (?!) holding the continent, and how are they attached? It triggered a profound sense of wonder to imagine what it would be like to see the sky change as you were towed through space.

(The cover to *Classics Illustrated* #149 inspired this same sense of wonder, but the story inside failed to deliver. It was a real disappointment, but the cover remains my second favorite *Classics Illustrated* cover… #124 remains in first place!).

This story does a very entertaining job of dealing with the mystery, even though, unexplainably, the solution to this conundrum is revealed on the splash page! Even more puzzling is the fact that, in spite of this revelation, the editor, at the bottom of page four, still asks the reader if she/he has figured out the mystery! (Hmmm...maybe splash pages were produced ahead of schedule also?)

I assume that Gardner Fox wrote the uncredited story, since it includes his trademark scientific tidbits (such as the area of North America – 8,300,000 sq. miles), and a reasonable explanation of why, on the trip through space, the atmosphere still clings to the continent and why everything doesn't freeze in the vacuum of space. (Non-DC comics seldom tried to explain such obvious difficulties, nor would they dare to draw such attention to them!)

The uncredited art upholds DC SF's high standards (without Wally Wood helmets), including detailed landscape landmarks, such as the Grand Canyon, and the Isthmus of Panama. The North American continent is drawn with meticulous care on its intergalactic journey. What kid could resist fantasizing about this trip?! (Another aside – The second story in this comic features a character who is a "renowned collector of Science-Fiction" who has a "complete collection of all (SF) ever published". His name? – Mr. Forrest! Could this be an early tribute to our favorite fan - Forrest Ackerman?)

The last cover comes from *Strange Adventures* #150, and it's a doozy! The comic sports a terrific grey-tone cover illustrating "When Earth Turned Into a Comet". It is my choice as one of the top comic covers of this time period. Irresistible! How could such a thing be possible, and why? It inspires empathy for the astronauts, as they view, with horror, the most terrifying event imaginable! The only thing worse than the world ending this way, would be to watch it,

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DC SCI-FI TEASERS

(Continued from page 61)

knowing you were marooned and doomed (Brrrrrrr!).

The story, however, disappoints by breaking an unwritten rule of this type of comic - the cover must be integral to the story! I won't spill the beans, but let it suffice to say that, if you were disappointed by the "Dallas" TV show episode where Bobby Ewing steps from the shower, you'll probably be disappointed by this also.

Aside from this quibble, we get a decent story (which I again assume is by Gardner Fox?), with great (Carmine Infantino?) art. We learn interesting facts about comets and the moon, and view interesting cyclopean aliens with "faceless creature" ears. (One feature of DC Silver Age comics, that is rarely highlighted, is the one-page or half-page "Amazing Ratios" feature, common in many issues. I learned facts from these that stayed with me to the present day. Gardner Fox's extra tidbits, in the stories themselves, were gravy. See, Mom, comics are educational!) The rest of this issue features a great two part Atomic Knights story. Wow, a super grey-tone cover and an Atomic Knights story? This comic has to be one of the greatest bargains of the Silver Age! Sorry I quibbled.

If you haven't discovered the teaser covers of the DC SF Silver Age, I hope this whets your appetite. It's too bad that E. Gerber didn't show more DC SF covers from the late '50s and early '60s, but part of the fun is discovering one on your own. (I'm still dying to find out why the "Invaders From the Ice World", on an unknown number *Strange Adventures* cover, look exactly like snowmen, as they emerge menacingly from their spacecraft – complete with ratty stovepipe hats, corncob pipes, carrot noses and pieces of coal for eyes! Gee, these covers still work!...) ■

Rolf Gerdau has been an avid collector of ACG and DC Silver Age for the past 12 years. In "real life" Rolf is married and works as a postal clerk in Nebraska.

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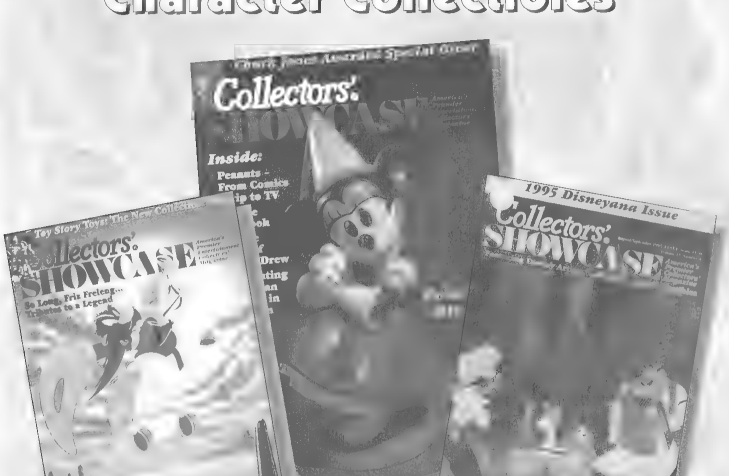

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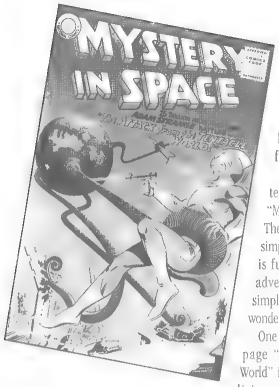


CLASSIC AND COLLECTIBLE COVERS... (ABOVE) "The Attack From The Tentacle World!" in *MIS* #60 (Jun 1960) and "Menace of the Super-Atom!" in *MIS* #56 (Dec 1959).

THINKING MAN

(*Continued from page 45*)

Infantino and Anderson is very lush and captures that atmosphere of futuristic adventure of the story and lends credibility to the science fiction setting.

Infantino and Anderson teamed up again in #57 in "Mystery Of The Giant Footprints." The art is very atmospheric and the simple story about invading giants is fun to read. These nine page adventures are the essence of simplicity, but remain escapist little wonders nonetheless.

One of the stranger tales is the nine page "The Attack of the Tentacle World" in #60 (June 1960) in which a living planet attacks Rann. The intelligent planet is in search of beings to live on its surface, because it is lonely. Adam determines that its mind emits a deadly radiation, and so with the planet's permission (it calls itself Yggardis, a rather Lovecraftian sounding name), Adam performs surgery to separate the planet's mind from its inert matter, in essence blowing off a piece of it to create a binary world.

Another interesting adventure is "The Weapon That Swallowed Men!" in #63 (November 1960), another nine page wonder drawn by Infantino and Anderson. This features a standard alien invasion in which they use a weapon which can dissolve people and reduce them to molecules until they are released. Adam out-thinks the aliens by training the people of Ranagar to fight and to coat their bodies with different elements. The coatings cause the aliens to keep readjusting the settings on their weapons until the people get close enough to fight the aliens hand-to-hand.

In #64, "The Radioactive Menace," Adam determines how to defeat a radioactive being who had been exiled from Rann into space a billion years ago by the once dominant race on that planet.

Anderson was inking the strip more regularly by this point and the art combined with the story to produce adventures which were both exciting to read and beautiful to look at.

"The Mechanical Masters Of Rann" in #65 (February 1961) features aliens who use a fighting machine clearly inspired by what the Martians used in the H.G. Wells novel *The War Of The Worlds*. We also get to see more native animal life on Rann in the form of a Tigrabar, which is basically a tiger with a unicorn horn. While each story has a little drama on Earth while Adam awaits the zeta beam pick-up. In this issue he has a battle on Earth when he's attacked by a man-eating plant.

On Rann Adam finds that robots in huge walking machines have arrived to protect the people from any menace. Adam takes the opportunity to go sight seeing on his adopted planet. In nine pages Gardner Fox packed a lot as "The Mechanical Masters of Rann" are well-intentioned, but the alien invasion they defeat (Rann must be a jewel in space to be invaded so much), almost turns back on them when the machines suddenly run out of power and Adam Strange has to save the day again at the last minute. "Mechanical Masters" is one of the more interesting stories because it shows so much more of Rann, and the art is some of the best in the series.

Up until around 1987, all of these issues of *Mystery In Space* with Adam Strange were fairly inexpensive. I remember buying a copy of #56 in fine in 1985 for $15 through the mail and was told by the dealer that almost no one ever buys these books. But in '87 all of the DC Silver Age books began to skyrocket in value, which meant fewer hobbyists have been able to buy, read, and appreciate them. Lower grade and "reader" copies can still be acquired at fairly reasonable prices however. But regardless of condition concerns, these books are still fun to read. Seeing that beautiful Infantino/Anderson art on the classic Gardner Fox Adam Strange adventures is a rare thrill indeed.

Hitting Their Stride

By this time the team of Fox, Infantino and Anderson were really hitting their stride as each story sought some new imaginative wrinkle which was explored with the visual splendor that only the team of Infantino and Anderson could provide. Just as he had demonstrated in *Strange Adventures* and *The Flash*, Infantino could render futuristic cities, landscapes, and hardware both imaginatively and convincingly, and Anderson knew just how to finish the job with his graceful inking.

In "Vengeance of the Dust Devil" #70 (a sequel to the story in #68), Adam Strange battles a Dust Devil unsuccessfully on Rann, only to have them both drawn back to Earth when the zeta beam wears off. It is on Earth where Adam must defeat the creature, making it a somewhat different sort of adventure this time. This willingness of Fox to depart from the formula is what kept this series interesting.

Some of the covers were also quite striking and called out to the reader to buy and read this strange adventure. Issue #71 is a prime example of this and had considerable appeal to young readers. Its cover depicted a globe-headed being changing Adam into a crystalline creature and turning a crystal being into a double of Adam Strange. This issue also began an increase in the length of the Adam Strange stories… 17 pages here and 15 pages in subsequent issues.

The inside front cover of #73 (February 1962) has an open letter regarding the increase in cover price from ten to twelve cents. In spite of the increasing quality of the stories and the feedback from teenage and adult readers, DC clearly believed their readers were younger. The letter begins, "Dear Boys and Girls. .'

Many feel that the series hit its "high plateau" with the publication of *Mystery In Space* #75 (May 1962, "The Planet That Came To A Standstill") and kept on going. This book length adventure co-starred the Justice League of America and demonstrated that this second string hero was getting first string attention. It even won an Alley Award from the then nascent group known in 1962 as comic fandom. This story set us up for a big fall at the end because Adam is transported to Rann via a spaceship and therefore could have remained indefinitely… except for an injury he receives from the villain's weapon which prevents him from remaining on Rann for more than a year at a time. Sad to say, other, later, less skilled hands would tamper with this even more. So next issue it was back to the "infrequent visit status" again, although Adam did indicate that he hoped that Alanna could visit Earth one day.

Adam seemed to get his wish in the book-length adventure "The Cloud Creature That Menaced Two Worlds!" in #81 (February 1963). This story has it all, and it is so chock full of plot and imagination that it made us wish there could be many more 25 page Adam Strange stories.

Issue #82's 16 page "World War On Earth And Rann!" certainly has enough ideas for a full length story, and that arresting cover is one I still remember seeing on the stands when it was published in late December 1962.

With #87, Adam Strange had his stories cut to only 12 pages while Hawkman became a regular co-feature. Anderson had inked only one Adam Strange story since #82 and was now the penciler and inker for Hawkman in *Mystery In Space*. This co-feature climaxed in #90 (March 1964) in a book-length team-up of Hawkman and Adam Strange which was drawn by Infantino and inked by Anderson. "Planets In Peril!" is also one of Fox's best scripts the series, but little did readers realize that it was virtually their swan song in *Mystery In Space*.

The Last I & A Adam

"Puzzle of the Perilous Prisons!" in #91 would be the final Infantino and Anderson Adam Strange in the 1960s as the creative teams on the book were abruptly replaced. It seems that Batman was doing a slow fade from glory and needed a creative shot in the arm. As a result editor Julius Schwartz,

Beyond Mystery In Space

by James Van Hise

The adventures of Adam Strange continued periodically in the'70s and '80s. A short-lived revival occurred in the fading days of *Strange Adventures*. (Briefly retitled Adam Strange Adventures.) Amid the reprints was an occasional new story such as "Beyond The Wall of Death!" in #222 (January 1970), a 10 page story written by Denny O'Neil and drawn by Gil Kane and Murphy Anderson (who had teamed up before on Adam Strange on a couple *Mystery In Space* covers such as #59).

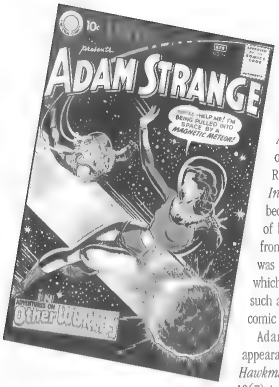
The last Gardner Fox-written Adam Strange story appeared in "picto-fiction" format (a short story with many illos by Murphy Anderson) in *Strange Adventures* #226. It was titled "The Magic Maker of Rann." It remains the only Adam Strange story of this type ever done. It was also the only new story in that issue which was otherwise filled with reprints. It was one of Fox's last stories for DC Comics, and it is appropriate that it would be for the character Adam Strange.

Adam and Alanna were married in a two-part tale in *Justice League Of America* #120 & 121 (in 1975). Neal Adams did a JLA cover that included Adam on *JLA* #138, and writer David Michelinie attempted to do justice to the character in a team-up with Superman in *DC Comics Presents* #3 (November 1978) drawn by Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez.

In 1980 and '81 Adam Strange became a back-up feature in *Green Lantern* and a couple of times was even penciled by Infantino. There was one brief stab at glory in *Green Lantern* #137 .. the story was inked by Murphy Anderson, but it seemed a bit rushed to me and lacked the old magic. Issues of *Green Lantern* #145 & 146, which were penciled by Infantino but inked by others, had a much better grasp on the old style. Carmine Infantino's last hurrah on Adam Strange was when he drew the origin in *Secret Origins* #17 (1987). The 23 page tale (adapted from *Showcase* #17) was inked by Tony DeZuniga.

In *Swamp Thing* #57 & 58 (1987), Alan Moore did an interpretation of the character that, in my opinion, severely deteriorated the character of Adam Strange and completely missed the idea of what made this classic hero so vital and interesting. Sadly, this set the stage for the less-than-effective mini-series DC would present three years later. Moore has recently remarked that he dislikes the way modern writers have slavishly imitated what he did on *The Watchmen* and other stories and turned virtually every comic book into a dark vision of the super hero. Unfortunately, stories such as Moore's Adam Strange "devolution" more than set the stage for this… it created a pattern that others gleefully followed.

In 1990 an ill-considered revisionist version was done in a three-issue mini-series entitled *Adam Strange*. It was written by Richard Bruning and drawn by Andy Kubert and Adam Kubert. The art is superb, but the story commits violence on both the character and his continuity. It is best considered an Elseworlds story, if it is considered at all.



TOP BILLING FOR RANN'S HERO
Showcase #19 (Apr. 1959) Presents Adam Strange in Adventures On Other Worlds!

along with his stable of talent (Gardner Fox, Carmine Infantino, Murphy Anderson, and others) were switched over to *Detective Comics* and *Mystery In Space*, and *Strange Adventures* became the province of editor Jack Schiff. Space Ranger then moved into *Mystery In Space* and Adam Strange became an unrecognizable shadow of himself until he was dropped from the title eleven issues later. It was an ignominious end to a career which had just peaked and had been such a high water mark for the entire comic book industry.

Adam's only other Silver Age appearance of any significance was in *Hawkman* #18 & 19 (March and May, 1967) in which he co-starred with the winged wonder in a script by Gardner Fox and superbly drawn by Murphy Anderson. These are the Silver Age Adam Strange stories which matter, the ones worth reading, and the ones which still hold up well.

While much is made of Adam Strange thinking his way out of dilemmas since he has no super powers, his character actually reacts much the same way that other ordinary people put into extraordinary situations react. Such is the case in both the back-up stories in *Mystery In Space* as well as in the stories in its companion title, *Strange Adventures*, which shared editorial and creative staff with *Mystery In Space* until 1964.

Science fiction is largely the realm of ideas and *Strange Adventures* and *Mystery In Space* were similar to what was being done in the digest magazines of the 1950s both in spirit and imagination. This is because at the time Julius Schwartz was still very much in touch with what was going on in that field, as were the writers. The divergence between science fiction comic books and science fiction prose occurred in the 1960s when science fiction expanded into new areas and broadened its vistas of exploration. 1960s SF comic book, on the other hand, remained firmly planted in the 1950s.

Adam Strange was born in the '50s and his stories are very much of that time. They are straightforward adventures much in the same way that the stories of Edgar Rice Burroughs are. Adam arrives on Rann, encounters a menace, and determines a clever way to defeat it. Because of the characters in the series we enjoy this familiarity. Adam Strange, Alanna, and her father, Sardath, are the only continuing characters, although the planet Rann and its capital city-state Ranagar are a part of the continuity as well.

We enjoy returning to this place of familiar wonders. Editor Julius Schwartz and writer Gardner Fox were the tour guides to this glittering alien world in which the unexpected was what we always looked forward to. Added to this was the rather unique touch of Adam Strange being an ordinary man whom fate had chosen at random for this experience. We could easily imagine ourselves thrust into such a wondrous situation in which our wits and intelligence were all we had to depend on, as well as the super science of this wonderful alien world.

Idealized Version Of Man

In spite of all that Adam learned on Rann, he never used it for his own benefit back on Earth. Rather he wanted to remain on Rann and considered this adopted planet his new home. Added to this is the unselfishness of Adam always willing to risk his life to help the people of Rann. He is a hero in the truest sense of the word, something which many comic book writers today seem to find a difficult concept to grapple with. These old Adam Strange stories from the 1950s and '60s may seem rather simple in comparison to what is being done in comics today, but they have their complexities and they succeed more often than the standard output of the major companies today in one thing... telling a straightforward entertaining story in which there is a main character, a hero, whom we can admire and care about. Thirty years ago such an approach to storytelling was taken for granted. Today it is apparently an exception.

The kinds of stories done in *Mystery In Space* with Adam Strange can still be told today. Modern readers may require more complexities in personality and characterization, but these needn't be grim, dark forbidding secrets such as alcoholism, adultery or drunk driving. They can be the things in a person's past which made them see that heroism

❖ ❖ BIBLIOGRAPHY ❖ ❖

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is needed in the world, and why violence and killing need to be avoided in light of thinking one's way out of a situation. The anti-hero, a concept which arose in the late 1960s, slowly worked its way into comics and was ultimately absorbed into heroes who are violent and bloodthirsty and supposedly need to commit mayhem in order to be interesting. Heroism in the '90s apparently means that they're better than the villain, while still being badly flawed and trapped in a difficult existence.

Adam Strange symbolized the purer vision of the hero, the kind popularized by Edgar Rice Burroughs and so many others in the pages of the pulp magazines, and then brought to four color life during the Golden Age of comics. His adventures in *Showcase* #17-19 and *Mystery In Space* #53-91 encapsulate that very clear, unobstructed vision. He is an uncomplicated hero, an idealized version of man to be sure, but one that there is nothing wrong with striving to achieve. He could be taken at face value and accepted for what he was, whereas in today's comics he would be treated with suspicion and investigated to find his hidden agenda.

Heroism at its core has its own sense of purity which can and should be accepted and explored. The dark side of the hero used to be the villains they fought, not the secrets in their hearts that made them frauds. In attempting to question the notion of the perfect hero, comics have gone too far in the opposite direction and abandoned them completely until a hero is defined by the size of his gun and how many people he shoots.

Adam Strange was transported to a world where he saw that he could do some good, and he did his best to achieve that. There would be nothing wrong with reviving the character and returning to that basic, honest, exciting premise. The reason those Silver Age Adam strange adventures remain so popular and fun to read is because, at their best, they achieved a sense of timelessness. We can read *Mystery In Space* #82 and "World War On Earth and Rann!" today and it is both fun to read and look at, and there is nothing like it being done in the modern comic book marketplace.

Returning to the kinds of stories originally found in Adam Strange and John Carter of Mars is not a case of nostalgia, it's looking for the kinds of stories that nobody else is doing any more--the kinds of pure adventures about heroes fighting for justice and honor in the most objective sense of the words. It is reading a story to be brought up... instead of brought down. It is the search for that elusive sense of wonder which can still be found in the works of the true fiction masters... masters like Fox, Infantino, and Anderson. ■

James Van Hise has been reading comics since 1959 and been in comic fandom since 1963. In 1970 he joined the staff of the classic fanzine Rocket's Blast-Comicollector. *Today he writes books and magazine articles about TV, film, and comic books. His recently published book,* Pulp Masters, *has been widely acclaimed.*

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High demand for pre-hero DC and Marvel!

Platinum - We've all seen the ads from Diamond Galleries and the breakout section included in the update and latest Guide. This interest is nothing new, but more and more collectors and dealers are entering this rarefied market with interest To date, supply vs demand is extremely one-sided and probably will remain so. Nevertheless, a few sales of note has been already broadcast.

Sales: The Funnies #92 FN $140; Deadwood Gulch GD+ $45; Mutt And Jeff 1928, w/o Dust Jacket $625; Strange As It Seems #1 VF- $925 ; Toonerville Trolley #1 FN $100.

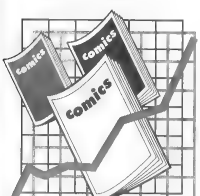
Golden Age - GA is still moving very briskly along, and many collectors honestly feel that if one wants to put together a "collection" for the long term, the time to do it is now, even as costly as it might seem. Enough capital and faith in the continuing longevity of the market has belied any hesitations that a short term slowdown would produce any bargains. Would any of the great books find their way to the mainstream marketplace if there was a slowdown? Most are doubtful, and believe they would be absorbed quickly enough. The continued interest in the early Golden Age books (and the late Golden Age material from the smaller publishers) continues to fuel the overall Golden Age market. Keep an especially sharp eye out for material from the more obscure publishers, as interest continues to escalate with little sign of abatement in the near future.

Sales: Best Comics #2 abVF $220; Action Comics #56 VF+ $675; Action #72 VF+ $585; Our Flag #1 FN/VF $2,000, Green Lantern #3 abFN $1,400; All Select #4 VG/FN $395; Sub Mariner #1 VG+ $4,200; Target #1 abFN+ $950; Jungle #2 g $180; Captain America #68 VF $1,200; More Fun #51 VG $2,100; Plastic Man #1 FN+ $2,400; Whiz #15 VF- $800; Planet #35 FN++ $310; Key Comics #1 VF+ $400; Hang Man #3 FN+ $625; 4 Color #43 VF/NM $435; Samson #4 FN/VF $315; Punch #13 NM $545; Green Mask #1 g+ $210; USA #4 abVF $1,380.

Post Golden Age (1946-49), Pre Silver Age (1950-56) - In addition to the continued and growing interest of the "Good Girl" books, pre-code horror and crime, and scarce one shots… interest in pre-hero DC and Atlas books in heating up. Mystery in Space, Strange Tales, Strange Adventures, Tales To Astonish and Tales Of Suspense are finding quite a receptive collector base after the past few years of exposure in Pat Calhoun's regular CBM column. Locating these books is increasingly difficult as the line between this era and early Silver Age begins to blur for some collectors. There is obviously a huge and almost insatiable demand for this material.

Sales: US Fighting Air Force #1 VF/NM $98; Phantom Lady #13 FN $1,400; Intimate Love #9 NM $70; Voodoo #19 VF $185; Forbidden Worlds #1 VF- $670; Freckles And His Friends #5 FN $32; Trapped #1 VF/NM $110; Ideal #3 FN $90; Bruce Gentry #1 VF/NM $510; Pictorial Romances #4 VG $65; Rin Tin Tin #1 FN $75; Flash #101 GD $380; Planet #66 VF $395; Secret Loves #2 FN $125; Target V10 #2 VF $210; Wyatt Earp #4 NM $95; All Flash #32 FN $345.

Silver Age - After Golden Age went through its heyday in the 70s, and coupled with Gerber's exhaustive research, collectors were able to step back and better ascertain the relative rarity of particular titles and issues. Silver has just emerged from that same evaluation, and those that did their homework are actively shopping for certain books that seem a bit more scarce than others. The consensus is that Pre 1963 DC is generally more scarce than Marvel …, but there are certainly a number of early Marvels that continue to be elusive in high grade (this is not news to most) Likewise, key books continue to be in demand, with high grade still bringing multiples of Guide. In contrast to the early 60's books, many suggest that beautiful high grade copies of the late *(continued on page 74)*



GREG PHARIS & DAVE GRISEZ

SAN DIEGO COMIC & COLLECTIBLES

San Diego, California

Since the "Biggie" (San Diego Comic Convention) is almost upon us and summer is here, you can see the market flexing its muscles in anticipation!

The Silver Age has been especially good for us, DC's in particular. We have to chalk up one of the primary reasons being that we are still in the midst of acquiring a sizable collection (see last market report) that spans the late 50s into the early 70's. All grades are selling well and there seems to be something for everyone's taste.

Silver Sales: Detective #286 VG $15, #298 VG+ $75,#304 FN- $20; Action #285 VG+ $35,#276 VG+ $30; World's Finest #113-#125 avg. VG+ sold at Guide; Jimmy & Lois (Supie's bestest buddies) sell well in all grades Lois #25 VG+ $35,#32 FN $25,#28 VG+ $30,#35 VG $18; Jimmy #50 VG+ $200,#63 FN #15, #56 FN+ $30; Adventure #286 FN $42, #300 VG+ $80, #296 VG $200, #269 GD $25, #27 VG $22; Superboy #100 FN $70; Adventures of the Fly #11-13 FN $20 each, #14 FN $32, #18 VG $10, #200 FN $18.50; Adventures of the Jaguar #2 FN $32,#3 FN $3, #4 FN $25, #5 FN $22, #7 FN $20 and #10 VF $30.

Auction Blues? We at SDC&C have noticed in various trade magazines that there are more and more mail order auctions. Certainly these auctions bring out obscure four color treasures, many of which are being listed for bigger and bigger bucks, and they often make difficult-to-find books available to a wider audience but they *(continued on page 76)*

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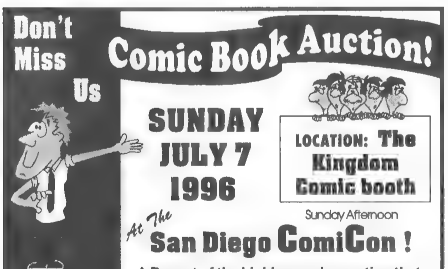
(continued from page 72) 60s Marvel and DC Silver is in ample supply. This is still a matter of debate among those in the know, but I think that they remain quite a bargain regardless! Consider, many are priced at $35-70, and that's a bargain.

Sales: Showcase #8 GD $1,350, #22 GD $400; Star Trek #1 FN $185, Space Adventures #33 FN+ $120, Atom #1 GD $110, Atom #7 VF+ $925, X-Men #2 FN $395; Sea Devils #1 VG $135; Amazing Spider-Man #2 GD $600, Hulk #102 NM $145; 80 Page Giant #4 FN $49; Daredevil #1 FN+ $495; Tower Of Shadows #1 FN $12; Batman #155 VG $85; Amazing Adventures #3 GD $55; Avengers #4 FN $400; Worlds' Finest #72 GD $60.

Post Silver Age (Bronze Age, 1970-79) - So what are the difficult to find early 70s books? Few know, and most aren't telling… yet. Information is tough to gather on these books amid the frenzy to among many collectors to "snap them up" quickly. Romance, Horror, Gothic, and the many "oddball" titles lead the way on collector want-lists. 100 page issues and the Kirby 4th World books are beginning to find a large following as prices begin an upward climb. Collectors are quickly trying to educate themselves about this complex market. But the main reason so many new players are entering this segment of the market is that prices are incredibly affordable. This single factor allows Bronze age material to hold great promise. If ever the word ground floor was applicable… it is here!

X-Men Giant Size #1 NM $360; Young Love #197 NM $36; The Demon #1 NM $28; Forever People #9 NM $18; Adventure #425 NM $10; Supergirl #1 NM $14; Adventure #435 NM $18; Amazing Spiderman #126 $45; Journey into Mystery #1 NM $12; Blitzkrieg #1 NM $8; Unknown Soldier #205 NM $22; Night Nurse #3 NM $38; Legion of Superheroes #1 VF/NM $25; Wonder Woman #200 NM $16; Tarzan #207 NM $15; Detective #438 NM $38; Marvel Team Up #1 NM $110; Plop #1 NM $12; Marvel Chillers #1 NM $8; Marvel Comics Super Special #1 VF/NM $50.

Answering the ever-present question "what is going to be the next high demand area this spring and summer" is the preoccupation of most dealers and collectors right now. Sure, we are always searching for that great key book in high grade for a bargain price, but when those are just not to be found, what do we turn to next? Trying to stay one step ahead of the next "breakout" issue or title is often frustrating… but when we actually do find that issue, it makes the whole effort worth it. Good luck finding that undiscovered and plentiful vein of ore in your area! ■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MARKET REPORTS

BOB HUGHES • ARCHANGELS

Manhattan Beach, California

The marketplace has taken quite a roller coaster ride during this past year with plenty of nerve racking thrills. Thank God that a more stable and tranquil atmosphere has settled upon us. Some of the prices were beginning to give me a nose bleed. With the dust settling, the recent prices included within the new Guide begin to reflect true values of books and thus, heavy multiples which seemed to be the norm rather than exceptions for pricing books just a few years ago has all but become extinct. Nevertheless, quality Golden Age and Silver Age comic books continue to sell very well, just as they have done for decades.

With the values of DC and Timely titles rising higher and higher each year, be on the lookout for a large shift in collector interest and demand for more esoteric titles such as Fox, Quality, Continental, Chesler, and the biggest "sleeper" of them all… Fawcett! Remember that Captain Marvel actually outsold Superman at one time and is still waiting for a comeback!

Golden Age books still reign over all comicdom. Let us begin in my favorite realm… the DC Universe. The King of the Superheroes, Superman, is a very strong seller with his earliest adventures in Action Comics realizing record sale after record sale.

A few of these transactions include. Action #10 App. VF $4,800, #21 VG/FN $600, #29 FN+ $850 (Cosmic Aeroplane), #33 VF+ $1,300, #44 VF $800, #52 VF- $800, #60 VF $700, #108 VG+ $175, A nice copy of Superman #14 VG+ $950, #17 VF+ $1,500, #23 FN+ $700, #24 VF+ $2,500, #26 FN+ (Crescent City) $350. Superman issues #14, #17,#18, #23 & #24 continue to be in very high demand among collectors. The Batman still holds his own· Detective Comics #12 GD- $1,100, #34 App. VF $1,200, #35 App VF+ $4,000, #37 FN/FN+ $3,000, #267 FN- $125. Some other DC sales include: Adventure #35 App. FN+ $550; More Fun #57 (cleaned) $1,400; Wonder Woman #1 FR $1,500, #1 App. FN+ $4,500. A few uncirculated early Overstreet Price Guides sold recently· #2 NM- $500, #3 NM/MT $350, #6 *(continued on page 76)*

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CATMAN #11	$1850
CATMAN #14	$1785
CATMAN #15	$1785
CATMAN #18	$1785
CATMAN #19	$2200
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SPEED #41	$1800
SPEED #43	$2000

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The Golden Age market is booming! Judging from the variety of requests we've gotten in our stores and through our advertising on the internet, just about every category of book is in demand. The superhero is still the hottest, with Timely's being the most requested. Books with L. B. Cole covers and "good girl" art comics have made a huge resurgence in popularity recently. Also hot are pre-hero Golden Age books, but they are very difficult to come by. As for acquisitions and sales, we recently picked-up a great run of World's Finest complete from #1 (World's Best) through #100. The first ten issues sold quickly as did several others; #71 & #72 sold at 2 1/2 times guide price. We also purchased about seven hundred western comics from the forties and fifties. Included were Lone Ranger #1-90; a run of Straight Arrow starting with #1, and lots of Avon, Fiction House, Turok, M.E., etc. We've already sold about twenty-five percent of this collection through our stores before we have even had a chance to advertise them! We also just got in a rare and beautiful appVF More Fun #73 (restored by Susan Cicconi).

Silver Age - Amazing Spider-Man continues to be the best seller/ most requested. Recent Sales include #3 FN+ $1025.00 and #5 & #6 $1550.00 for the pair, VF condition. Just about all early Marvel books still sell well for us in just about any grade. This does not hold true for mid-1960's issues of titles like Strange Tales, Tales of Suspense, Journey into Mystery, and Daredevil, which are pretty slow except in high grade.

Major superhero titles from DC are moving well, with Batman stuff still in the lead. Wonder Woman is also a strong seller, and much tougher to find than most DC titles. Most 12¢ issues sell briskly at over guide prices. DC war books are also harder to come by and do very well.

Other Silver Age sales include: X-Men #1 VF $4000.00, #1 VF restored $1100.00, and #1 G- $275.00; Brave & Bold #28, Action #252, Tales to Astonish #27 & #35, Daredevil #3-6, Avengers #6, #9, #7, FF #13 in various grades at about guide prices.

GREG PHARIS continued from page 72

also command the larger dollar values because of the potential "feeding frenzy!"

But as collectors, the both of us are generally frustrated with several aspects of the auction scene. First, we think it would be a whole lot easier if sellers would just offer a book for sale for what they feel it's worth. This tried and true method is fast, simple, and quick.

Second, our experience has been that some folks (not everyone) who run auctions use questionable methods. On more than one occasion, we were the last to call in and bid, but somehow still did not make the winning bid. Maybe it was just our bad luck... or maybe not. On other occasions where we did make the winning bid, we were oft times disappointed with the quality/condition of the items. They didn't seem to be as good as they were described.

At any rate we're curious if others have had similar experiences. Bad or good, let us know via CBM.

See everyone at San Diego!

ROB HUGHES continued from page 74

NM- $50. Some esoteric sales: Blue Bolt #113 FN $200, #112 FN/VF $250, #120 FN $200, #124 FN/VF $160; Exciting Comics #2 VF+ (Mile High) $1,000; Mask #1 VG/FN (cleaned) $475; Mighty Mouse #1 VG/FN $28; Thrilling #71 NM- $600; Terror of the Jungle #200 FN+ $150. In the Timely arena Ol' Wing-Head leads the way! Captain America #3 App. VF $4,500, #5 App. VF $1,500; Human Torch #15 VG- $350; Marvel Mystery #20 App. VF $960, #13 FN+ $1,500, #69 VG+ $300, #70 VG/FN $300, #23 VG/FN $400; Sub Mariner #2 App. FN $650.

Spidey still swings over all challengers in the Silver Age. Amazing Fantasy #10 VG #75, #15 PR $450; Amazing Spider-Man #20 NM- $450 (Erwin copy); Daredevil #1 (2 copies) NM sold at $2,500 EACH! Fantastic Four #1 FR/GD $750, #53 VF+ $60, #57 NM $80; Incredible Hulk #1 VG+ $1,200; Strange Tales #89 GD+ $150; Tales of Suspense #39 NM (Erwin copy) $7,000.

And that's all for now. See everyone in San Diego. Best of fortunes.

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Hulk	#1	VG+50	$1800
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Xmen	#1	F60	$1200
Avengers	#4	VF/NM 89	$1300
Strange Tales	#110	VF81	$900
Fantastic Four	#48	NM+96	$1500
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Brave & The Bold	#34	VF82	$1200
Justice League of America	#1	VF75	$1600
Showcase	#4	F+70	$7500
Showcase	#22	VG+50	$725
Green Lantern	#1	NM92	$6000
Detective Comics	#225	F/VF74	$2800
Mystery in Space	#53	VF79	$800
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